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. N O V E L :

INTERSPERSED WITH SOME

P O E T I C A L P I E C E S.

BY

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

D U B L I N:

PRINTED FOR CHAMBERLAIN AND RICE, P. WOGAN,
P. BYRNE, H. COLBERT, W. M'KENZIE, J. MOORE,
J. JONES, GRUEBER AND M'ALLISTER,
W. JONES, G. DRAPER, R. WHITE,
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N O V E L.

C H A P. XXI.

MR. Clifford, accompanied by Julia, and Chartres, arrived in London soon after Christmas, where a spacious and elegant house, at the west end of the town, was prepared for their reception.

Frederick Seymour had taken a house for himself in the neighbourhood, and he and Charlotte were settled in town a few days before Mr. Clifford arrived. Julia, since the period of Seymour's marriage, had endeavoured, by every effort in her power, to banish his idea from her mind. She carefully avoided thinking of him, because she now

felt

felt herself inclined to pity, while she blamed his unfortunate passion; since he had fulfilled his engagements, at the price of peace, and had renounced all chance of happiness, to comply with the demands of honor. But Julia was conscious, that though this conduct gave him some claim to her esteem, esteem was a sentiment which it was dangerous to cherish, and that, on this subject, reflection was at cruel variance with repose; since, whenever the idea of Seymour recurred to her mind, she was imperceptibly led into a comparison between him and others; and the decision which her heart involuntarily made, was by no means conducive to its tranquility. But, though she had not the merit of insensibility, the purity of her mind corrected the softness of her heart. Rectitude stood in the place of indifference; and, since she could not entirely controul her feelings, she disregarded them altogether, and only studied, with a fervent desire of acting right, to regulate her conduct by the strictest propriety.

It was at her solicitation that Mr. Clifford remained in the country till after Christmas. He was impatient to see his daughter, but Julia always found some reason for delay, and procrastinated the journey to town, till no farther pretence could be urged, without incurring suspicion. She attended him to town, prepared to act a part which she felt would be difficult, but which she stedfastly resolved should be free from self-reproach.

The day before her departure from the country, she visited alone the ancient chapel, where the remains of her father, and grandfather, were deposited. Here she continued kneeling a considerable time at the tomb, rapt in meditation, and finding it every moment more difficult to tear herself from the spot. At length she arose, and, clasping her

her hands together, while she continued gazing on the tomb, "Oh my father," she cried, "thou canst no longer guide and direct thy child, but may she never forget thy precepts! And thou ever beloved and venerable old man! whose honored image still lives in my heart, oh, may thy sacred remembrance be the surest guard of my conduct! If I am ever tempted to deviate from the path of rectitude, may I but think of thee, and surely my heart will return to its duty: oh, never, never can I meditate on *thee* and persevere in what is wrong!—Dearest old man! though the grave hides thee from my view, the recollection of thy goodness, thy sanctity, shall be as a shield to thy offspring; and may thy exemplary piety have entailed a blessing on thy descendants! Oh, may I live—and may I die, like thee!"

Mr. Clifford, when near London, sent a servant forward to inform his daughter of his coming. Frederick Seymour was not at home, but Charlotte hastened to her father's house, where she had soon the pleasure of receiving him. When their first emotions at meeting had subsided, Charlotte intreated her father and Julia to go home with her, and spend the day at her house. They were preparing to set out, in Charlotte's carriage, when Julia's maid came into the room and begged to speak to her. Julia went out, and the maid said to her, "Indeed, Ma'am, I could not help calling you out, for I went into the hall just now to look after some of the boxes, and there's a poor old man standing at the foot of the steps, that says, Ma'am, he knows you, and begged me, for the love of God, to supplicate you to see him; and indeed, Ma'am, I had not the heart to refuse the poor old creature, he looked so pitiful."

Julia

Julia desired she would tell him to come into the hall. The old man ascended the steps with great difficulty, leaning on a stick with one hand, and holding by the railings with the other. His face was pale, and deeply furrowed with wrinkles, and his features, which were strong, had a marked expression of settled sorrow. A considerable quantity of white hair which was parted in the middle of his forehead, hung down his cheeks: his coat, which frequent patching had rendered of many colours, did not appear dirty; and his linen was perfectly clean. His figure, though much bent by age and infirmity, still retained something of a military air; and, though he tottered as he walked, his step was not that of a clown.

Julia recollected him instantly; he was an old soldier, who had served in her grandfather's company, had fought the same battles, and shared the same dangers. After nineteen years service, he obtained his discharge on account of ill health, but was not entitled to the benefit of Chelsea-hospital. His son, however, who was a carpenter, maintained him by his labour. Julia remembered, from her infancy, this old man, who used to make frequent visits to her father's house, where he was always received with kindness. She had often flown with eagerness, when a child, to announce his arrival to her grandfather, by whom she had been early taught,

“ To press the bashful stranger to his food,
“ And learn the luxury of doing good !”

Julia was shocked at seeing the old man so much altered, and emaciated. He told her, that his son had died four months ago, of a fever, and that, since that period, he had suffered extreme distress.

“ I have

“ I have been forced, Madam,” said the old man, “ to part with every bit of furniture that was in our room, to pay the rent, and keep body and soul together. I have nothing left but the bed I lie on—but all won’t do, Madam, and I must go to the parish at last! Oh, wherefore,” said the old man, bursting into tears, “ wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which look for death, but it cometh not, and seek for it more than for hid treasures? But I heard, Madam, two days ago, that you would be here, so I thought I would see you once more before I die. I knew you would have compassion for me.”

“ Yes, indeed,” said Julia, with eagerness, “ my good old friend, you shall never want while I can relieve you: think no more of going to the parish, we will provide for you.”

The poor old man could not speak, but he wept bitterly. Julia led him herself into a parlour. A porter, who had been assisting to carry in the baggage, and passed through the hall while she was carefully leading the old man, with the tears standing in her eyes, said to one of the servants, “ Aye, she may die when she likes, for (swearing a terrible oath) she’s sure enough of going to heaven.” Julia ordered wine for the old man; and, when he was revived by it, left him, to tell her uncle what had passed. She returned with Mr. Clifford and Charlotte, who listened with the utmost compassion to the old man, while he repeated his tale of sorrow, and dwelt on the virtues of his son. When he had eased his heart by this recital, he talked of his old master, and of Captain Clifford, fought over his past battles, and lamented Captain Clifford’s untimely death with a simplicity of honest sorrow, which drew tears from

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all his auditors. Julia was so much affected, that her uncle and Charlotte hurried her away ; but not till the old man had received a liberal donation, together with the assurance of a comfortable provision for the remainder of his life. While he, putting his feeble hands together, implored that the “ blessing of him who was ready to perish, might be upon them.”

In the way to Frederick Seymour’s house, Julia dried her tears, and endeavoured to compose her mind, that she might meet him with the calmness she wished ; but the figure of the old soldier presented itself to her imagination, and the words he had uttered concerning her father rested upon her heart. She felt the deepest depression of spirits ; but when the carriage stopt at Seymour’s door, and she saw him hastening through the hall to receive them, she summoned all her spirit, and assumed an appearance of serenity. Seymour was far from being so collected : his embarrassment was but too evident to Julia. He used, again and again, the same expressions of pleasure, and repeated the same enquiries, till he was at length checked by Chartres, who gravely declared, that the question which Mr. Seymour then asked him, he had answered three times already. Had Charlotte been less unsuspecting, or Mr. Clifford more penetrating, they could not have failed to observe the strange and distracted manner in which Seymour performed the honours of his table. When the servants had withdrawn, “ Come,” said Mr. Clifford, “ my dear children, let us drink a bumper to the happiness of our new-married pair. Julia, my love, come, fill your glass to the brim, and pledge me to your cousin’s happiness !” Julia filled her glass, wished Charlotte all happiness, bowed to Seymour, and, after swallowing a few drops,

drops, put down her glass. "Fie, Julia," said Mr. Clifford, "you ought to have emptied your glass to this toast." Julia changed colour, and again took up her glass. "Why, really, Julia," resumed Mr. Clifford, "you drink *my* toast, as if it were a serious business." "Indeed, my dear," said Charlotte, "you've performed your part with as much sad solemnity as if you had a presage that we were *not* to be happy." This remark, in Julia's present state of agitation, was more than she could bear: her emotion was too great to be controuled, and she burst into tears. "My dearest Charlotte," said she, taking her cousin's hand, "be but as happy as *I* wish you, and you will be blest indeed." "My dear friend," said Charlotte, "I know all your affection; but why indulge this sadness? I assure you, I shall find happiness a very dismal thing, unless you will consent to be happy too." "This old soldier has affected you," said Mr. Clifford; "but you must not indulge low spirits, my love; you must be cheerful for my sake: you know you are my only child, now Charlotte has forsaken me, and I can't live without you." "I am grateful," said Julia, in a broken voice, "indeed I am." Seymour, during this scene, sat fixed like a statue: his eyes were riveted on Julia, his lips sometimes moved, but he did not utter a word. Julia, recovering herself a little, cast a glance at Seymour, perceived his situation, and feared that Charlotte would observe it. "Will you give me a glass of water, Mr. Seymour?" said she, in order to rouze him from his stupor. He started as from a dream, and poured some water into a glass. "I am quite ashamed of myself," said Julia; "few have so much reason to be happy as I have; but the old soldier has sunk my spirits." "However,"

ever," added she, with a smile, " I promise never to behave so ill again, and this once you must all forgive me." Charlotte and Julia, soon after, left the room.

When they were gone, Mr. Clifford filled his glass ; " Come," said he, " Seymour, let us drink your cousin's health." " With all my heart," said Seymour, filling his glass hastily. " Really," said Chartres, " Miss Clifford seems vastly ill : I never saw her look so pale," added he, turning to Seymour, " except the day you were married." " Yes—I recollect—I mean I remember—" replied Seymour, speaking with difficulty, " she was affected at parting with her friend." " I do not wonder she is ill," said Mr. Clifford : " the old soldier talked of my poor father and brother, till I could scarcely bear it myself." " But," rejoined Chartres, " Miss Clifford was certainly ill before the old soldier arrived. I fancy the air of London disagrees with her, and she seemed to feel it at some distance ; for I observed that, during the last stage, her colour went and came every minute." Seymour listened in agony to these observations, which, however, made no impression on Mr. Clifford ; who, when Chartres had finished his speech, said, with warmth, that Julia was a charming creature, and that he loved her like his own child. " Indeed," added he, " she is one of those women whom it is impossible not to love." Impossible indeed ! thought Seymour. " Her disposition is very amiable," he replied. " So amiable," said Mr. Clifford, " and her person so lovely, that I wonder any young man can see her with indifference." Ah, thought Seymour, who *can* see her with indifference ! " She is a charming young woman," he rejoined. " I hope," said Mr. Clifford, " to have the pleasure of

of seeing her happily settled this winter. Her countenance and figure, tacked to ten thousand pounds, I think, bid fair for a good marriage; and, when she is settled, I shall have nothing to do but to die." Seymour listened to this matrimonial project with the feelings of a criminal who hears his own condemnation. His soul recoiled at this plan of felicity; and he longed to persuade Mr. Clifford that happiness and matrimony had formed no inseparable alliance, but, on the contrary, were often quite estranged from each other. He had, however, the prudence not to trust his feelings on this subject, and remained silent; while his uneasiness was entirely unobserved by Mr. Clifford.

When Seymour reflected on what had past, he was not much displeased at the recollection of the cause of Julia's emotion at dinner; nor was he concerned at the information that she looked pale on the day of his marriage, and that her colour went and came during the last stage. Such is the selfishness, the inconsistency of passion, that Seymour, though he would chearfully have sacrificed his life to save Julia the slightest uneasiness, would yet willingly have excited in her mind those sensations which overwhelmed his own with anguish, and have been soothed by acquiring an influence over her heart, which, he well knew, would never, in the smallest degree, affect her conduct; and which, indeed, his own principle of honor, and a respect for her character, which amounted almost to idolatry, prevented him even from wishing it should. He might, therefore, have reflected, that any sensibility to his passion, could only serve to involve her in a degree of misery, which was almost insupportable to himself. But, the region of passion is a land of despotism, where reason exercises but a mock jurisdiction; and is continually

continually forced to submit to an arbitrary tyrant, who, rejecting her fixed and temperate laws, is guided only by the dangerous impulse of his own violent and uncontrollable wishes.

C H A P. XXII.

MR. Charles Seymour lost not a moment in paying his respects to Julia, upon her arrival in town; expressed the most lively pleasure at seeing her; expatiated on the encreased bloom of her complexion; spoke in his lowest tone, and assumed his most finished mode of address. Julia, at length, quite fatigued with softness, and oppressed with panegyric, told him, " that she was obliged to go out;" finding that, like most other dull people, he was subject to the error of making long visits; and was, at present, too much engrossed by the care of acting his part gracefully, to remark her extreme weariness of his performance. He intreated to have the honor of attending her where she was going; and they walked to her milliner's, where caps and ribbons seemed to sharpen his wit, and furnish him with new modes of compliment; and where he waited with great resignation, while she purchased several articles of dress. No set of people are so patient as the interested. They drudge on indefatigably in the same circle, and with one uniform pace, as quietly as a horse in a mill, contentedly expecting the end of their labours. Julia could at last only get rid of Mr. Charles Seymour's attendance, by calling on Charlotte, at whose door he took his leave; filled with self-complacency at the progress he was convinced he had that morning made in her favor; but at the same time recollecting, that the extraordinary trouble he was now obliged to take, was owing to his former entire neglect of the lady; and

and marking it, as one of his future maxims, that a young woman, who has a rich uncle in the East Indies, although she has no fortune herself, is to be treated with gallantry. In the mean time, he reconciled himself to his past conduct, by reflecting, that there are some events, which no prudence can foresee; and some errors, which experience only can correct.

Charlotte was going to call on Mr. Chartres's mother, where Julia accompanied her. They were received with infinite delight by Chartres, who had returned to his mother's house, where he found nothing that could atone for the loss of their society: and Mrs. Chartres was also glad to see them, not solely on account of their kindness to her son, but likewise because she thought so splendid an equipage as Charlotte's, did honor to her door, and reflected some of the lustre of its silver trappings on herself. It is necessary to give a sketch of this Lady's character.

Mrs. Chartres was one of those persons to whom time is a burden, which, without the assistance of cards, would be insupportable. She considered whist as the first end of existence, and the sole pleasure of society; for she thought conversation the dullest occupation in the world; and, although she knew there was such a term as friendship, her feelings did not convey much force to its meaning. Yet, she was not insensible of some preference towards those who gave her the best dinners. A present of a brace of woodcocks, of which she was remarkably fond, would also secure her partial regard, and a young hare never failed to win her heart. With too little sensibility to feel her own deficiencies, and too little discernment to perceive when she was treated with contempt, Mrs. Chartres could bear neglect without mortification,

mortification, and derision without resentment. She was perfectly satisfied with being admitted into company, as one who helped to make up the necessary number at a whist table, and to act a part, which an automaton, with a very little farther improvement in mechanism, could have performed as well. It was fortunate for Mrs. Chartres, that she was not difficult in her choice of society, or rigorous in her demands of attention and respect; for she found solitude the most insupportable of all evils. Her mind resembled an empty mirror, which has no character, no images of its own, borrows every impression from some passing object, and, if left to itself, would for ever remain vacant.

Mrs. Chartres delighted in new acquaintances; for, in proportion as she was known, she generally found people's civilities decline. But this never gave her any uneasiness, because she contrived, with great ease, to provide herself with a succession of new visitors. She kept a pack of visiting tickets in her pocket-book, and, wherever she went, distributed them liberally to any strangers who were near her, or with whom she happened to play at cards. By these means her acquaintance was numerous, though not very select; but she comprehended so little the difference between one person and another, if they were equally well dressed, that she would only have been puzzled and perplexed by a greater power of choice.

Whenever Mrs. Chartres was disengaged, she was sick, and passed the day in bed; but, when she was fashionably dressed, quite secure of a good dinner, and an evening party at cards, she felt the charm of existence, could think of the evils of her own lot with resignation, and of the evils of others with the most perfect equanimity.

Mrs.

Mrs. Chartres had a habit of laughing whenever she spoke. Having therefore laughed at a storm of snow, been no less merry at the bad roads, and found her son's awkwardness an equally good joke, she told Charlotte and Julia, with a titter, that she would send them cards of invitation the next morning, to meet a party at her house that day fortnight; adding, that she was sure they could yet have no engagements, as they were but just come to town, and that they would for ever oblige her by coming. In vain these ladies assured her, that they should prefer coming when she had no other visitors; and, that they liked conversation better than cards. Mrs. Chartres would no more bear a reason, than she would have given one, "on compulsion;" and, without paying the smallest attention to what they said continued to urge her request with such vehemence of entreaty, that, at length, they yielded to her importunity, and promised to come.

As the morning was fine, Julia got out of the carriage at Charlotte's door, and walked home. In her way, she saw a young bird that was unable to fly, hopping on the pavement. A boy seized it, whom she bribed with a shilling to relinquish his prize, which she was taking home, when it escaped from her hand, and fell down the area of a house. She desired the servant, who attended her, to knock at the door; and a search was made for the little fugitive, but it could no where be found. Julia wrote the following lines on this incident.

E L E G Y

On finding a young **THRUSH** in the Street, who escaped from the Writer's Hand, as she was bringing him home, and, falling down the Area of a House, could not be found.

MISTAKEN Bird, ah, whither hast thou stray'd?
My friendly grasp, why eager to elude?
This hand was on thy pinion lightly laid,
And fear'd to hurt thee by a touch too rude.

Is there no foresight in a Thrush's breast,
That thou down yonder gulph from me would'nt go?
That gloomy area lurking cats infest,
And there the dog may rove, alike thy foe.

I would with lavish crumbs my Bird have fed,
And bought a crystal cup to wet thy bill;
I would have made of down and moss thy bed,
Soft, though not fashion'd with a Thrush's skill.

Soon as thy strengthen'd wing could mount the sky,
My willing hand had set my captive free:
Ah, not for her, who loves the muse, to buy
A selfish pleasure, bought with pain to thee!

The vital air, and liberty, and light,
Had all been thine: and love, and rapt'rous song,
And sweet parental joys, in rapid flight,
Had led the circle of thy life along.

Securely to my window hadst thou flown,
And ever thy accustom'd morsel found;
Nor should thy trusting breast the wants have known,
Which other Thrushes knew, when winter frown'd.

Fram'd with the wisdom Nature lent to thee,
Thy house of straw had brav'd the tempest's rage ;
And thou, thro' many a spring, hadst liv'd to see
The utmost limit of a Thrush's age.

Ill-fated Bird ! and does the Thrush's race,
Like Man's, mistake the path that leads to bliss ;
Or, when his eye that tranquil path can trace,
The good he well discerns, thro' folly miss ?

C H A P. XXIII.

THE Honourable Miss C——'s waited on Julia a few days after her arrival in town; profuse in professions of regard, and eager to know if she meant to give many concerts and balls, in the course of the winter. Julia felt as much contempt for their present civilities, as for their former neglect; and received them with a degree of coldness, by which they found that a plan of tender and romantic friendship, intended to commence that very morning, was not likely to succeed.

These ladies talked much to Julia of the fashionable amusements, mingling, with great address, instruction with entertainment; and, while they informed her what every body of a certain fortune *did*, obliquely hinted what she ought to *do*. Julia forced herself to hearken to their remarks; but, the moment the Miss C——'s left the room, she forgot their existence; nor did she recollect that there was any such thing as gaiety in the world—her whole thoughts being absorbed by the observations she had made on Frederick Seymour's behaviour since her arrival in town. She saw him struggling with ill-concealed wretchedness: she bitterly reproached herself for her weakness on the first day of their meeting; and endeavoured to atone for it, to her own mind, by avoiding all particular conversation with him most carefully. She perceived that he now no longer exerted that resolution which had formerly led him to shun her society; but that, on the contrary, he always at-

tended his wife when she visited her father; and was always at home when Julia was expected. He seemed unable to refuse himself the indulgence of seeing her; and when they parted, he was only occupied by the consideration when they should meet again; for he found that the charms of her conversation soothed his unhappiness, and that the tumult of his feelings was often calmed in her presence. His disturbed mind resembled a tempestuous flood, whose waves arise dark and turbulent, except where the sun-beam throws a line of trembling radiance across their agitated surface.

When the evening arrived, on which Mrs. Chartres's card assembly was to take place, Charlotte called upon Julia, and the two ladies went together. Mrs. Chartres's room could not hold four card-tables without some inconvenience to the company; but, unluckily, the point of her ambition was *five*. Her aspiring mind preferred grandeur to ease. She felt a noble contempt of difficulties, when her aim was glory; and, as she thought that five card-tables, filled with well-dressed persons, was a very sublime *coup d'œil*, she contrived to place them with such masterly arrangement, that not one inch of ground was lost. There was also a loo-table, in an adjoining room, or rather closet, round which the company had just sufficient space to sit, with their chairs close to the wainscot. One of the card-tables in the large room was so near the door, that the candle placed next to it blew out every time the door was shut or opened. Mrs. Chartres regretted that the wind was high: but then her five card-tables had a fine effect; "and it is so easy," thought she, "to light a candle, and besides, who knows but the wind may fall?"

Charlotte

Charlotte and Julia arrived before Mrs. Chartres had adjusted all her card-tables, and gained admittance with some difficulty. Mrs. Chartres pushed through the crowd to receive them; and, having a very small space to move in, by a swing of her arms, which she thought fashionable, she overturned a candlestick which stood on a card-table in her way, and set fire to her gauze apron. Many screams, and much confusion, ensued: but the flame was soon happily extinguished; and, after lamenting for some time the depredations of fire on gauze aprons, she left that fierce element to itself, and returned to the duties of the evening. She told Charlotte and Julia, "That she would not ask them to sit down till the card-tables were fixed, when they would obtain a good seat." They stood for a considerable time; but at length, (perceiving there was little chance of the ceremonies being adjusted, and finding themselves much incommoded by the sudden and frequent movements of Mrs. Chartres, and her son, whom she repeatedly ordered to be alert, and who often met her in mid-way, and ran against her in all directions,) Charlotte and Julia procured a seat for themselves; and had leisure to contemplate the scene before them. It seemed as if the art of receiving company consisted in perpetual motion. Mrs. Chartres flew from one part of the room to the other, without intermission; enquired, in the hurry of her task, if those guests were cold, whose faces were scorched by being placed too close to a large fire; and hoped Julia found the room warm, who was seated with her back against a door, which was perpetually opening, while she was almost frozen by a blast which issued from it. Neither enquiry on the part of Mrs. Chartres, or complaint on that of Julia, could serve any purpose.

pose. The company were packed for the evening, and no person could move without causing a general disturbance.

One card-table was still vacant, and the task of making up another whist-party remained yet unperformed. The attack was begun on a Mrs. Sanford, who at first absolutely refused to play; but at length, overcome by the steady perseverance of Mrs. Chartres, she gave her reluctant consent.

After lavishing much eloquence, Mrs. Chartres prevailed on three other persons to make up the party, who had before refused to play. Some time was spent in settling the price; and when this was done, Mrs. Sanford, who had retired to a corner of the room, was told the party waited for her. But Mrs. Sanford, who had by this time gained sufficient fortitude to sustain another siege, resolutely refused to play. The attack, however, was renewed with fresh vigour, and poor Mrs. Sanford at last yielded to its violence. The party was settled, and Mrs. Chartres, relieved from this load of anxiety, found leisure for a little conversation with such of the company as would not be enlisted in the service of the card-table; though she felt much indignation at their refractory conduct. She now rejoiced that one lady had escaped cold—hoped her neighbour on the right had escaped too—and regretted that her on the left was still hoarse. Then she enumerated all her own complaints—expatiated on her weak nerves—and afterwards, by a very easy transition, passed from bodily to mental evils; lamenting that she had had nothing but ill-luck the whole winter, and that she had lost three crowns a night; and declaring that her best fortune was never more than five small trumps, without one king or queen.

Mrs.

Mrs. Chartres expected to awaken general sympathy in her losses; but she forgot that there is more distress in the world than pity, and that the world cannot afford to waste any of its little stock upon five small trumps. She then complained how much company had disappointed her, and told Charlotte she had received twenty apologies that morning. A little while after, she related to another lady the same circumstance, with the addition of ten more excuses; and, when Frederick Seymour arrived, complained to him how ill her acquaintances had behaved; "For no less than forty cards of apology," said she, "have I received this morning." "The men in buckram will soon be here," said Charlotte. "I cannot help thinking," rejoined Seymour, in a low voice, "that these forty excuses were well-timed; unless Mrs. Chartres could adopt Milton's plan with the evil spirits, and, by some commodious transformation, suit the dimensions of her company to those of her apartment."

Mrs. Chartres soon after told Julia, in the confidence of friendship, that her old uncle was dead. "But I only received the account last night," said she, "and it would have been so much trouble to forbid all the company, that I thought I would let them come, and keep it a secret;—don't tell!"

Tea was brought by Thomas, a young countryman, who had enlisted in one of the new-raised regiments; but having been in a short time discharged, because his size was below the military standard, he had entered into the service of Mrs. Chartres. His figure was squat; his shoulders broad and high; and his livery somewhat old-fashioned, with a profusion of buttons, and long waist-coat pockets; and, upon the whole, he bore a very striking resemblance to Mr. Parsons, in the entertainment

entertainment of High Life above Stairs. It was easy to perceive that Thomas had been accustomed to march by beat of drum; and though, in the exercise of his present peaceable profession, he wore no defiance in his aspect, but, on the contrary, hung down his head, and looked meek as a lamb, yet his military step still rendered him formidable. He presented the tea-cups in the same abrupt manner in which he had been taught to present his firelock; and, Julia being unprepared for these martial movements, a cup of tea was spilt on her gown. Thomas's face became like scarlet at this accident. Mrs. Chartres scolded loudly, and declared she believed it would be impossible to cure him of his awkward ways. "Then," said she, "he blunders for ever; I never knew him once do right; he brings me into such scrapes!—I ordered him, a month ago, to leave two tickets at Mrs. C——'s, and Mrs. N——'s, which he thought proper to forget; and now Mrs. C—— is gone to the East-Indies, and Mrs. N—— is dead:—how provoking! Mrs. Chartres's discourse did not proceed without interruption; for, whenever a knock was heard at the street-door, she instantly started from her seat, obliged the company to make way, and stationed herself at the door of the apartment, where she paid her compliments to her visitors, before she suffered them to pass the threshold; and where, for the most part, she stood a considerable time in expectation; Thomas being so unwilling to leave the company above, to admit those who were waiting in their carriages below, that his mistress was, more than once, compelled to remind him of his duty by a push on the shoulder.

The rubber being now finished, at the table where Mrs. Sanford had been compelled to sit down,

down, she came to Mrs. Chartres, to know who was to cut in. "I know of nobody," said Mrs. Chartres, with great composure, "you must play on." At this moment, Frederick Seymour, who had been called away, returned, fortunately for Mrs. Sanford, who instantly quitted the table. Seymour had little inclination to play. He however came prepared to do penance; and, being convinced, like other votaries of mortification, that his merit would be great, in proportion as his sensations were disagreeable, he quietly seated himself at whist.

A young man now entered the room foppishly dressed; and, casting a look of self-importance around the company, he advanced with a sauntering step to Mrs. Chartres, and apologized for his sister's not coming, who, he said, was detained by two friends, that had just arrived from the country. "La," said Mrs. Chartres, "I wish she had come, and brought her two friends with her, they would have helped to fill up the room." "You are very good, Ma'am," replied Mr. Burton; "upon my word we never thought of that." He then turned to speak to an acquaintance, and Mrs. Chartres took that opportunity of informing Julia, that she had asked Mr. Burton on purpose to meet her; for "I know," said she, "you are a great reader; so I thought you would like him; for, I do assure you, he's vastly clever, and knows all about Cicero, and Hume's History of England." By this time the connoisseur in Cicero, having finished his compliments, returned to Mrs. Chartres's circle, and, placing himself next to Julia, asked her if she had seen the new play?" She said she had not. "I'm surprized at that Ma'am," rejoined Mr. Burton, "I assure you every body likes it." "Well, I really long to go," said Mrs.

Chartres, with her usual laugh; "but Mrs. Smith has been so much engaged, that she could not take me, and I have no notion of going to the play in a hack, and coming into the boxes with the straw about one's petticoats, as if one had just escaped from Bedlam. To be sure, I might have gone a fortnight ago to the new play, but they would only give us a second row, and, at the other house, they gave us a first; so I thought the difference of the play didn't signify much."

"And pray what was the play you saw, Ma'am?" enquired Mr. Burton. "Macbeth," replied Mrs. Chartres: "I declare I was quite disappointed, for I had never seen it before, and I had a notion Lady Macbeth was a good sort of woman; and there is such wickedness going on, and so many extravagant fancies!" Mrs. Chartres concluded, as she had begun, with a laugh, and then made her way to another part of the room.

Meantime Mr. Burton intreated Julia to join the party at loo, declaring that he was sure she would win, and he would bet any sum upon her cards. When he found she was inflexible in her determination not to play, he endeavoured to entertain her, while he displayed his own knowledge of fashionable life, by talking of the public places, particularly the theatre; and by discussing at large the merits of the different actors and actresses; only interrupting his criticism to give her a significant wink at the manner in which Thomas presented the lemonade. Julia, quite disgusted with his vulgar and impudent familiarity, rose to change her seat, which was a matter of some difficulty. Placing herself near three young ladies, who were dressed in the utmost extreme of the fashion, she endeavoured to avoid Mr. Burton's affluity, who followed her with officious gallantry,

try, by entering into conversation with these ladies; but she found herself wholly unqualified for the task. Their conversation consisted entirely of anecdotes of the nobility, and minute details of all that had lately past in the great world. In vain, however, did these ladies attempt to dazzle and awe each other, by the rank and importance of their respective friends; for, if one mentioned an incident, which had happened to her friend, Lady such a one, the other young ladies immediately recollected some circumstance, as well worth relating, of a friend of equal rank.

Frederick Seymour now left the card-table, where he had been scolded, the whole time he played, by his partner, a little fat woman, above forty, with a pert countenance, and a manner still more pert than her physiognomy, who kept herself in pocket-money by cards, and was eagle-eyed to the smallest deviation from what she thought the rule of the game. She and Seymour gained the first rubber. One of their opponents happened to have no silver, and, while she was trying to get change, the other laid down a crown to Seymour, which his partner instantly snatched up, saying that the other lady should pay Mr. Seymour, for she herself was so apt to forget! After cutting for partners, she was again Seymour's lot; and they soon lost double the sum they had gained. When Seymour left the table, Mrs. Chartres enquiring if he had won, he said, "he had no subject of satisfaction, but the success of others." His disagreeable partner now joined their circle, affected to talk of her ill-luck with indifference, and began sympathizing with Mrs. Chartres, who again brought forward her own bad fortune. "I observe," said Seymour to Julia, "that people are at as much pains to display their feelings, on occasions

occasions when they feel nothing, as to hide them at cards, when they are losing their money, and really feel a great deal." Mrs. Chartres watched her opportunity, and, while she fancied herself unobserved, could not resist moving towards the card-table which Seymour had quitted, and gently lifting the candlestick, to see if the card-money had been duly remembered. Being satisfied of this, she came up to Julia, and complained of her not calling upon her in a morning. "I seldom pay morning visits," said Julia. "Oh, I know you're always reading," said Mrs. Chartres; "I suppose you shut yourself up at home: are n't you charm'd with the *Pangs of Sensibility*?" "Is that the title of a book?" said Julia. "La, why, is it possible you have n't read the new novel, the *Pangs of Sensibility*?" "No indeed I have not," answered Julia, "Well, I'm so surprized! Nor you, Mrs. Seymour, not read the *Pangs of Sensibility*?" "No." "Nor have you never heard of it, Mr. Seymour?" "I must acknowledge my ignorance of the book," said Seymour, "whatever imputation it may be upon my taste." "Oh, pray do buy it," resumed Mrs. Chartres; "it will only cost you six shillings, and it's so excessively pretty; but the end's very dismal." "Well," said Seymour, "I shall be prepared for the worst; and you may depend upon it we will have six shillings-worth of sensibility to-morrow morning."

Thomas now announced Mrs. Seymour's carriage, not by coming forward, and telling her the agreeable tidings in a low voice, as is usual; but, having collected all his courage in coming up stairs, he opened the door, and, with a firm countenance, called out, as loud as he could, *Mrs. Seymour's carriage really!* which last word he

he pronounced so short and quick, and in such an elevated tone, that it had the effect of an electrical shock, and no person of weak nerves could hear it without starting. Charlotte rose instantly, and was hastening away with great alacrity; but she found this a more difficult enterprize than she imagined. Mrs. Chartres seized both her hands, declared she must not go so soon, assured her it was very early a hundred times in a breath, and, gathering fresh courage as she proceeded, at length, in a most authoritative tone, insisted upon her staying. Although unprepared for so violent an attack, Charlotte, when she had recovered her surprize, assigned a reason for going, which she thought unanswerable: she told Mrs. Chartres, "that she made it a rule not to keep her servants and horses in waiting in bad weather." "La," said Mrs. Chartres, "why, your servants can come into the house, and as for the horses, you told me two of your's were sick, and you had job horses; so why need you care about their waiting, since they are not your own?" Charlotte answered, "that, indeed, *that* reason had never occurred to her; but though the horses are *not* my own," said she, with some emphasis, "I must be gone this moment:" and she was again hastening away, when Mrs. Chartres suddenly placed herself between her and the door; declared that she had prepared a supper below for a small select party; expatiated on the cruelty of refusing to stay this once, when her supper was prepared; and then petitioned, implored, and persecuted, till she wrung from the distressed Charlotte her slow consent to send away the carriage for an hour.

The chosen party which Mrs. Chartres distinguished by an invitation to supper, waited a considerable time after the rest of the company were dif-

dispersed, before the repast was announced. Mrs. Chartres had not proportioned the number of her guests to the size of her table, which was so crowded, that the company were obliged to sit sideways, and, whenever a plate was changed, or a dish removed, to give way by general consent. But these inconveniencies Mrs. Chartres perceived with perfect indifference, and only lamented, that she could not prevail on more of her friends to stay. She heard, with equal composure, the vain applications which were made to Thomas for plates, knives, and forks. Thomas, when called upon, answered, "Yes," with great alertness; but, as nothing can come of nothing, it was entirely out of his power to supply the demands of the company. All that wisdom could suggest, or promptitude atchieve, Thomas performed. When desired to bring dessert spoons, of which there were none in the house, he presented tea-spoons; and when called upon for oil (an article which, in the hurry of preparation, had been forgotten) he produced vinegar, by way of substitute.

Mr. Burton had taken care to place himself next Julia, to whom he devoted his whole attention, and begged to have the honour of helping her to some chicken, enquiring what part she chose. She desired a wing. "Well, I declare," said Mr. Burton, "that surprizes me; I think a leg so much better. I believe I have a strange taste; but I like the legs of all fowls better than the wings; I even prefer the drumstick of a turkey." Julia made him no answer, as it was a point she felt not the least inclination to discuss. After supper there was much loud merriment; for the company in general seemed to be of opinion, that mirth and noise were synonymous terms, and gaiety merely a counterfeit, unless it was powerful enough

enough to disturb the neighbourhood. When the party became a little fatigued with this vociferous conviviality, Mr. Burton, in order, as he declared, "to keep it up," volunteered a song in the Italian manner, but in a voice that scorned all tune, and with so many strange cadences, that Charlotte, who was in good spirits, found it extremely difficult to avoid laughing. Mr. Burton, however, was so perfectly satisfied with his own performance, that, when the song was finished, he looked round to collect the applause of his audience. He then proposed sentimental toasts, which, he said, he liked of all things, among clever people: but Charlotte's carriage was now announced, who, impatient to be gone, hastened away with too quick a pace to be again stopped. Julia followed as fast as she could, happy to leave the ladies who were in friendship with the nobility, and escorted to the carriage by the gentleman who knew so much about Cicero, and had such a taste for the drumsticks of turkies. Frederick Seymour hastened after the ladies; but they could scarcely be convinced they had escaped, till they were out of the house; for Mrs. Chartres pursued them along the passage, with repeated wishes that they might not get cold, repeated thanks for their company, and a thousand "good-nights," till they were quite out of hearing.

In their way home, Charlotte laughed heartily at the recollection of all that had passed; while Julia declared, she thought the evening the longest she had ever spent. Seymour expressed his indignation at the horrible penance he had undergone; and all of them agreed never to make such a sacrifice of time again.

Mrs. Chartres, on the contrary, dismissed her guests with much self-complacency. She had

given a card-assembly, and a *petit-souper*; and had not sufficient penetration to discern that her sketch of elegance was a wretched daub; and, though it was copied from what she had heard of high-life, had as little resemblance to its model, as the picture of King William on a sign-post, to the real features of the hero it represents. When the company departed, Mrs. Chartres told her son, with an air of triumph, that the evening had *gone off* remarkably well. Chartres was by no means of opinion that the evening had *gone off well*: but that it was *gone at last*, was to him a most comfortable reflection; to whom it had produced nothing but confusion, perspiration, and distress.

C H A P. XXIV.

MRS. Melbourne, and Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, who had been some weeks at Bath, arrived in town; and soon after Mrs. Melbourne took an opportunity to repeat, what she had already more than once insinuated to Mr. Clifford, that Julia was incapable of the management of his family, and that he ought to watch her narrowly, and limit her expences. It may seem strange, that Mrs. Melbourne took the trouble to interest herself in Mr. Clifford's family affairs: but she had no less than two motives for this conduct. Since Julia was the age of seventeen, this lady had had a standing quarrel with her, on account of her beauty; and, though she had patched up a reconciliation on Mrs. Seymour's marriage, her former animosity revived, when she saw Julia mistress of her uncle's house, and living in greater splendor than her own daughter. But, independently of this parental jealousy, Mrs. Melbourne was a person who often intermeddled in the concerns of other people, merely as an exercise for the activity of her own mind. She had the highest opinion of her own penetration, was fond of command, wished to be the directing star of all her acquaintances, and distributed counsel, admonition, and reproof, with infinite liberality. There is, however, a remarkable difference in the value placed upon advice, by those who give, and those who receive it; and Mrs. Melbourne's tutelar care of Mr. Clifford's household, met with so cold a reception from that

that gentleman, that she determined to deprive him of the benefit of her instructions in future.

Mrs. Seymour soon invited Julia to a party at her house, where her chief amusement arose from the observations she made on Charles Seymour's behaviour. She could guess the rank or fortune of the persons with whom he conversed, with as much precision as if she had read their names in the Court Calendar, or had learnt from their broker the state of their funds: for, had the title, or wealth, of each of his acquaintances been weighed in one scale, and the degree of his attention in another, the counterpoise would have been found exactly even, without one grain of courtesy, one atom of kindness being wasted, or misplaced. If the rule of his conduct had been somewhat more noble, nothing could have been more praise-worthy than his diligent adherence to it; which was uniform, and undeviating; neither relaxed by tenderness, or moved by admiration. Politeness, in him, was the offspring, not of benevolence, but of selfishness; and though he laboured to conceal its hereditary likeness, under the mask of ostentatious urbanity, and studied candour, yet some lurking meanness, or insolent neglect, occasionally betrayed, to persons of penetration, its ignoble origin.

He devoted half an hour, in the course of the evening, to Julia; which was certainly half an hour lost, both to her and to himself; though he was gay and tender, witty and pathetic, by turns; muttered, sighed, and smiled, and repeated those flattering things, to which he was well convinced no woman could listen with indifference, when they proceeded from his lips. When he thought Julia had heard enough to be almost seriously in love with the speaker, to prevent that mischief, he sauntered

sauntered to the youngest Miss C——, who was sitting at some distance with a very grave countenance; but, when she saw him approaching, her features became more gay every step he advanced, and she was so sprightly by the time he drew near, that she received him with an encouraging titter, which she honoured his wit by renewing at proper intervals.

Meantime, Frederick Seymour, wholly absorbed by Julia, played at whist without knowing a card in his hand, and followed her with his eye wherever she moved. He saw her conversing with Mr. F——; observed that she seemed to have pleasure in the conversation; and that she smiled upon him with great sweetness: and, while he meditated with horror on the satisfaction expressed in her countenance, he finished the rubber very expeditiously, by making some capital mistakes. He paid his losses with great alacrity, and hastened to Mr. F——, whom he engaged in conversation; but he had no power to detain Julia, and she left her seat in a few minutes. Seymour did not dare to follow; and, while he was employed in watching her movements, entirely forgot that he was conversing with Mr. F——, till that gentleman left him and hastened to the party of ladies whom Julia had joined. Frederic Seymour now perceived, that in quitting the whist-table, he had only procured for himself a change of misery: again Mr. F. spoke, and again Julia listened. In vain Seymour endeavoured to witness this second conversation-scene with composure;—in vain he struggled to suppress his sensations;—it was a thing impossible! “Ah! who can hold a fire in his hand, by thinking of the frosty Caucasus?” Seymour, in a fit of despair, went to Charlotte, told her he was going to pay a visit, and hastened away. But, by the

the time he reached the street door, he heartily repented having left the room. He fancied he saw Julia rejoicing in his absence; and Mr. F—— happy in her smiles. He wished to find some excuse for returning: but the present agitation of his mind was not favourable to invention; and he was at last reduced to hope, that his horses feet might slip, his carriage break down, and that some kind disaster might furnish him with a pretence to go back. But while these things were passing in his mind, his coachman conducted him in perfect safety to his own door. He hastened to his study, but with no intention to read; walked up and down the room, then flung himself into a chair; then walked again; listened to every carriage that passed; thought Charlotte would never return; reflected how much time Mr. F—— had had for conversation; and was little comforted when Charlotte appeared, and told him she had left her father and Julia behind, as his carriage was not come. Seymour was surprised Mr. Clifford chose to stay so late, wondered Charlotte did not offer to set him down, and desired to know what company she left behind. Charlotte mentioned several names, but omitted Mr. F——, and Seymour was obliged to ask if he was gone when she came away? "Oh, no," said Charlotte, "I beg Mr. F——'s pardon, I declare I quite forgot him, and I wonder at that, for I left him talking to Julia." Seymour rose hastily from his seat, and walked two or three times across the room. He then enquired at what hour Mrs. Seymour's parties generally broke up; and gained no information. Meantime Charlotte grew somewhat tired of her husband's interrogatories: Yet," thought she, "it is easy to repeat a few names, and answer a few questions; and though I find them

them a little dull, because I am sleepy, I am glad he is amused."

At length, however, when Seymour again renewed the subject of Mr. F——, "Do, my dear Mr. Seymour," said Charlotte, "let me bid that worthy gentleman good night; and we'll have him served up at breakfast to-morrow morning." Charlotte went to sleep, as unconscious of the pain she had inflicted, by her intelligence respecting Mr. F——, as a child who sports with images of death, and prattles about the tall feathers of the hearse, to the afflicted mourner, who feels every syllable a wound.

Julia, though she had conversed with Mr. F—— with apparent cheerfulness, felt no such sensation at her heart. She had perceived Frederick Seymour's jealousy and perturbation, and trembled lest his unhappy passion should be discovered, and spread a wider circle of misery. She found some relief, after he was gone, in conversing with Mr. Seymour, who saw she was in bad spirits, and exerted his brilliant talents for her entertainment. He had a high place in her esteem. She respected his abilities, was charmed with his conversation, and sometimes secretly lamented, that he was not united to a woman more capable of conferring domestic happiness. But an incident happened, which totally altered her opinion of his character.

Mr. Clifford hired a housekeeper, on the recommendation of an old friend of his, to whom she had been long known. This person had only been a few days in Mr. Clifford's family, when she acknowledged to Julia, that she had lived many years with Mr. Seymour's mother, and that she had only left Mr. Seymour's service one year. Julia enquired into the reason of her quitting it. "Ah, Ma'am," said she, "it was because I was too honest,

honest, and loved that poor dear young lady, Mrs. Meynell, too well." "Who is Mrs. Meynell?" enquired Julia. "Have you never heard of her, Ma'am?" "No, never." She then related to Julia, that Mrs. Meynell's mother, who was the daughter of a Scotch Lord, married her father's chaplain, a Mr. Forbes. Her family renounced her; and her brother who soon after succeeded to the title, would never hear her name. Her husband died some years after their marriage, and Mrs. Forbes was so much afflicted at his death, that she fell into a consumption, and soon followed him to the grave; leaving one daughter. Several years before Mrs. Forbes's marriage, her eldest sister had married Mr. Seymour, an English gentleman, who was the father of the present Mr. Seymour. Upon the death of Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Seymour, who was then a widow, took her orphan child under her own protection. "She was just seven years old, Ma'am," said the house-keeper to Julia, "when she came to my mistress, and she had so many engaging ways, Ma'am, that she soon won all our hearts. Pretty creature! she would sit and talk of her poor mama, by the hour together. "To be sure, (she would say) my aunt is very good to me, but I suppose, Mrs. Evans, an aunt never loves one like a mama." "My dear," says I, "your aunt will be a mama to you now." "Yes," says she, "my aunt said so yesterday, and told me I might call her mama, if I pleased, and so I shall: but for all that, she's not my own true mama that was put into the coffin." "Poor little soul! I remember very well going into the room one day, and the child was standing at the window, crying: so, says I, What are you crying for, my dear? says I." "Nothing, Mis. Evans, only," (and she sobbed.)

bed,) "only that black coach, that went by, put me in mind of my mama; I was thinking how she kissed me, the last time, before she died; and I remember every word mama said. She took me in her arms, and held me so fast! and said, My poor child!—my sweet darling!—must I leave you?—God Almighty bless you, my poor orphan! and then she said something more about the fatherless—and then my mama cried so, Mrs. Evans!—and I cried very much indeed.—Pray, Mrs. Evans, what made my mama call me poor child? I'm not poor, you know; I have frocks enough, and a new black fash; and yet every body that comes to see my aunt kisses me, and says, Poor little thing! But I can guess why they call me poor; it's because I have no mama, and other little girls have a papa and mama too." "I could not bear to hear her innocent prattle, Ma'am, it went to my very heart. "Heavens bless you, my love," said I, "and keep you from all evil!" "And pray, Mrs. Evans," said she, "what is evil?" "I wish you may never know," said I. "But come, my dear," says I, "come into my room, and I'll give you a great peach." "No, I thank you, Mrs. Evans," says she, "keep it for me till to-morrow, if you please; I shall like the peach best when I'm not thinking of my mama."

"Well, Ma'am, she grew up, as one may say, like a fine plant, tall, and straight, and a very lovely creature she is: she has something, Ma'am, of your mild look. And so, Ma'am, as I was saying, my mistress could not help being fond of her, and gave her fine cloaths, and took her every where a visiting with her."

Mrs. Evans then informed Julia, that at the death of Mrs. Seymour, which happened when Miss Forbes was two and twenty, she was left entirely

tirely destitute; as Mrs. Seymour had nothing but her jointure, and it was not in her power to provide for her niece. The young lady, upon her aunt's death, determined to go out in the world, however unfit she felt herself to struggle with its difficulties. But this measure Mr. Seymour strenuously opposed, informing her, that he was going to be married, in a few months, to Miss Melbourne, and intreating that she would still consider his house as her home. He assured her of his utmost endeavours to make her situation happy; and proposed that, till his marriage took place, she should board with a family of which he had some knowledge.

"So, Ma'am," continued Mrs. Evans, "she hardly knew what to do. So, Ma'am, I advised her to go, till she could look about her: so she went, and, as soon as ever Mr. Seymour was married, he invited her to his house; but she said to me, the night she came, "says she, Mrs. Evans," says she, "I am come here for a few weeks, because Mr. Seymour urged it with so much kindness that I could not well refuse. But I am determined not to live in a state of dependance, and shall only stay till I can provide myself with a proper situation." "Well, Ma'am, Mrs. Seymour was prodigious civil to her at first; but she soon behaved so disrespectful, and so spiteful, you can't think. I believe in my conscience it was all *pure* envy, because Miss Forbes was handsomer than herself; for, Ma'am, Miss Forbes looks like a queen when she's dressed: Mrs. Seymour isn't fit to hold the candle to her. So, poor thing, she used to complain, Ma'am, of ill health, and never would appear when there was company, or go out with Mrs. Seymour; so Mrs. Seymour kept it a secret she was in the house."

house." "And where is she now?" said Julia, with eagerness. "Why you shall hear, Ma'am. She was resolved to go out in the world, but she couldn't hear of a situation directly; so Mr. Seymour told her she would make him miserable if she thought of it; but, if she disliked his family, she should go and board where she was before; so, Ma'am, she went, till she could hear of a place. Well, Ma'am, then he came every day to visit her, on pretence, to be sure, that she was his cousin; but at last, Ma'am, he had the assurance to make downright love to her. So she sent for me, all of a hurry, and cried bitterly, and told me of it; for, Ma'am, though I should not say it myself, I had always done my duty by her, and she knew how I loved her, and so she treated me like a friend. So, Ma'am; there was a captain on halfpay, a Captain Meynell, that visited where she was, and had made proposals of marriage to her; and, it was said, he had a good deal of money in the stocks; and so the best advice I could give her was, to take him for better for worse, though, to be sure, he was a little rough, and ugly enough, God knows. Well, Ma'am, she was half distracted, and at last she consented to marry the Captain, in despair, as one may say. So, Ma'am, Mr. Seymour gave me leave to go and dress her wedding dinner, and be with her; and plague enough, I had with their awkward servants, to be sure: There was a pretty dish of green pease over-boiled, that cost Mr. Seymour a guinea; for he sent them, though she wou'dn't see him, and a very handsome dish it was, to give the devil his due. There was a very good dinner to be sure, for the matter of that; I remember all the dishes. I'm sure I had vexation enough: the ducklings were over-roasted, and that sweet creature cried

so; many a salt tear I shed with her. I was so vexed about the ducklings, I never met with such an accident before; and many a pair have I sent up in my time, roasted to a turn; but then I had all my things proper about me. Moreover, Ma'am," says I, "what does it argufy," says I, "taking on so now, when the deed's done; but, poor soul! she only cried the more for that. She was dressed all in white, Ma'am, and as plain as could be, but she looked charmingly for all that. Well, Ma'am, she wanted to go directly and live in the country, to hide herself from the world, as she called it; but do you know, Ma'am, that monster my master (for a monster he is to be sure) persuaded her husband, who is but thick-headed, to stay in London, and he would get him some place or another; but all he wanted was to keep her here for his own vile ends. And now, Ma'am, he's always going there, on pretence of seeing Captain Meynell; but she takes on so, I believe she'll fret herself to death soon."

"Where does she live?" said Julia; "Why, Ma'am, in a little miserable sort of a lodging in Charles-street, Westminster. I'm sure I little thought for to see her come to that; and, I believe, she often goes without her dinner: for it turned out, that Captain Meynell had no money at all, and only married her in hopes that her great friends would provide for him; and, I believe, Ma'am, Mr. Seymour knew well enough he was poor when she married him; but he wanted to get her more into his own clutches. Well, Ma'am, and Mrs. Seymour goes sometimes to see her, but it's only to vaunt over her. Oh, Ma'am, it sets my blood up so when I think of it. So one day I gave it to Mr. Seymour pretty roundly, for all his doings; and told him a piece of my mind. And

"Sir,"

“ Sir,” says I, “ I should expect a curse, Sir,” says I, “ would come upon me, if I eat your bread any longer; and I desired to be paid my wages, and went off that very night.” Julia was now called away, but Mrs. Evans’s narrative had made a deep impression on her mind. She determined to get acquainted with Mrs. Meynell, and felt a generous impatience to soften her misfortunes, by administering all the comfort which her unhappy situation would admit. With respect to Mr. Seymour, she felt that severe disappointment which is experienced by an ardent and ingenuous mind, when it is forced to exchange the fervent glow of esteem and confidence, for disgust and aversion; and when, finding itself grossly deceived in its opinions of another, it is led with painful regret to lower its general standard of human excellence. She lamented that Mr. Seymour’s character, which appeared open, liberal, and elevated, should so ill bear a close inspection; and that his mind resembled one of those pictures which must be viewed by the dim light of a taper; since their coarse and glaring colours, which attracted the eye in the deceitful medium, shrink from the full and clear sunshine of truth.

But, while Julia’s heart throbbed with indignation at the oppressor, and melted with compassion for the oppressed, she fancied she saw the arm of indignant Heaven tearing the veil by which iniquity was concealed, and making manifest the sufferings of innocence. And, while she hoped to act as the agent of Providence, in protecting afflicted virtue, she exulted in the strengthened conviction, that evil, like a baleful meteor, has its appointed course, and then must set in darkness.

C H A P. XXV.

JULIA felt all the eagerness of ardent benevolence to become acquainted with Mrs. Meynell, and to endeavour, by every effort in her power, to alleviate her misfortunes. She determined to wait upon her immediately, but had too much respect for her unhappy situation to visit her without the customary forms of introduction.

She hastened to Charlotte, impatient to be informed if she had any knowledge of Mrs. Meynell, and anxious to solve a most painful doubt which arose in her mind, lest Frederick Seymour should be capable of deserting his amiable relation because she was unfortunate. A doubt of those in whose integrity we have confided, in whose virtue we are interested, is a situation of mind the most gloomy and comfortless. Suspicion is like a mist, which renders the object it shades so uncertain, that the figure must be finished by imagination; and, when distrust takes the pencil, the strokes are generally so dark, that the disappointed heart sickens at the picture.

Julia related to Charlotte the circumstances which Mrs. Evans had told her concerning Mrs. Meynell, concealing, however, her account of Mr. Seymour's criminal designs, which she thought it was improper to communicate to any one. Charlotte told her, that she had frequently heard Frederick Seymour speak of Mrs. Meynell with the most affectionate concern. "We have scarcely had a moment's *tête-à-tête*," said Charlotte, "since you came to town, or I should certainly

have

have mentioned to you what I had heard of her. Mr. Seymour has often told me how much he was shocked, at his return from the continent, to find her married to such a man as Captain Meynell; and he has visited her three or four times since we came to town, but she will not allow him to bring me to wait upon her. He says, he is sure that Mrs. Seymour has been insolent to her, and, I suppose, she apprehends the same treatment from me: I cannot intrude upon her against her consent, but I hope she will be persuaded to see me in time."

"But, my dear Charlotte," rejoined Julia, "we will not wait these slow determinations. She has not forbidden *me* to come, and I will go directly to Mrs. Seymour, oblige her to introduce me to Mrs. Meynell, and then bring you together at my uncle's." Julia, earnest in her project, without farther deliberation, called upon Mrs. Seymour, and enquired if she had an hour of leisure that morning. Mrs. Seymour assured her, that she was quite disengaged, and vastly happy to see her.

Since the period of Mr. Clifford's return from the East, Mrs. Seymour had behaved to Julia with the utmost cordiality, as she now thought her acquaintance eligible; though she could feel no friendship for a woman so handsome: for Mrs. Seymour was not like the world in general, attracted by "a set of features, or the tincture of a skin;" but, on the contrary, felt a generous affection for deformity. She was sensible, however, that her taste was singular, and she therefore concealed it carefully. After many expressions of kindness on the part of Mrs. Seymour, and some general conversation, Julia led to the subject of her visit, by mentioning that Mrs. Evans was now Mr. Clifford's housekeeper. Mrs. Seymour changed colour at this intelligence: "That's strange enough,"

enough," said she; pray, who recommended her?"—"An old friend of Mr. Clifford's."—"Well, I am sure," added Mrs. Seymour, with affected carelessness, "you will not keep her long. She is a most forward impertinent creature, and had been so spoilt by Mr. Seymour's mother, that I found myself obliged to part with her." "There is *one* circumstance, however," said Julia, looking steadfastly at Mrs. Seymour, "which gives me a favourable opinion of her; her strong attachment to Mrs. Meynell." "O yes," replied Mrs. Seymour, in manifest confusion, "she's a poor relation of Mr. Seymour's." "I wonder I never heard you mention her name," rejoined Julia. "Why, really," said Mrs. Seymour, "I thought it very unnecessary to tease you with a long history of Mr. Seymour's relations." "But I think Mrs. Meynell's story so interesting, and the accounts I have heard of her from Evans have prepossessed me so strongly in her favour, that I feel a great desire for her acquaintance; and the purpose of my visit, this morning, is to ask you to come with me, and introduce me to her." "Bless me, my dear Miss Clifford," said Mrs. Seymour, with apparent chagrin, "what a strange whim!—what in the world can you have to do with Mrs. Meynell?" "I have no other reason," said Julia, calmly, "for desiring her acquaintance, than that her character and situation interest me. But come, why should we waste time in talking of our visit? Mr. Clifford's carriage is at the door: I suppose you often call on Mrs. Meynell, and there will be nothing very singular in taking me with you." "Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Seymour, "you don't know what confusion the sight of a new carriage will create. It will shake Mrs. Meynell's nerves for a fortnight; she'll be flying into her bed-

bed-room to tie on a clean apron, and come to us in such a tremble!" " *That* will give me pain indeed," said Julia. " I assure you," rejoined Mrs. Seymour, " going there is the most distressing thing in the world. I was made so ill last time I went, by an unlucky circumstance.—You must know the lodges at a taylor's, and the men work in the garret: so the last time I called, her little girl of a servant was out of the way, and a four ill-looking fellow opened the door, and, when my servant enquired if Mrs. Meynell was at home, answered " Yes," and walked away. So I got out of the carriage and was going up stairs, for I knew it was in vain to wait for any body to announce me; and just as I reached the first landing-place, I met five or six men coming with a shocking noise down stairs. It really struck me that they were a gang of thieves, who had plundered the house, and were making off. I believe I gave a sort of scream, but they stopped, and made way for me very respectfully; and, who should these people be but the men who work in the garret, coming down to dinner. However, when I reached Mrs. Meynell, I was so ill with the fright, that I was forced to call for a glass of water. I waited a great while for it, for she was obliged to get it herself, and when I told her the reason of my being indisposed, she was so sullen that she would scarcely speak while I stayed. I suppose she very good-naturedly thought there was something of affectation in my fright. Because she is used to this formidable troop herself, she fancied that there was nothing in it to alarm me."

" Well," said Julia, " I am not at all deterred, by your encounter, from wishing to visit Mrs. Meynell; and feel more disposed to pity than blame her sullenness on the occasion you mention."

" If you will go," said Mrs. Seymour, with some asperity,

asperity, “ you *must* ; and if you find the acquaintance troublesome, remember it’s your own fault.” She then rung the bell for her maid, ordered, with much ill-humour, her cloak and gloves, and set off with Julia in Mr. Clifford’s carriage. Mrs. Seymour was extremely sullen the whole way; and, when Julia spoke to her, only answered by monosyllables, till they drew near the door; when she advised Julia to take care to hold up her gown while she went up stairs, or she would probably have her train tolerably dirtied from the feet of the workmen.

Julia found, that though Mrs. Meynell’s lodgings were mean, and such as bespoke extreme penury, the dirt and confusion, of which Mrs. Seymour complained, were violently exaggerated; but, notwithstanding this, the habitation appeared utterly unfit for the inhabitant. She seemed like a finely proportioned statue; the exquisite workmanship of Grecian hands, which those masters of art would have deemed worthy to inhabit a temple, and decorate a shrine; but which Gothic barbarity had placed in a rude and sordid hut, where it lay neglected, by those who were ignorant of its value. Mrs. Meynell was about twenty-four years of age; her figure was tall, graceful, and elegant; her countenance, with a considerable degree of beauty, had a strong expression of melancholy; and there was a dignity in her manner which commanded respect, even from those who were unfeeling enough to refuse it to her situation. She had heard much of Julia’s goodness from the old housekeeper, who had been to visit her since her residence in Mr. Clifford’s house; and, though Mrs. Meynell was unable to account for Julia’s visit, she was charmed with the sweetness of her manner, and conversed with her

with

with evident pleasure. When Mrs. Seymour rose to take leave, Julia gave Mrs. Meynell a card with her direction, and requested to see her, in a manner which shewed how much she wished it. Mrs. Meynell promised to wait upon her, and the ladies departed.

Captain Meynell did not appear during their visit; but we will give a short sketch of his character. He was about the middle size, thin, and rather genteel in his figure; but his manners were disgusting, and his person usually dirty. His mind was a strange compound of pride and meanness. He was continually boasting of his wife's family, and was not a little proud of his own, which was also respectable, but which he himself disgraced. He behaved with the most abject meanness, to all those who he thought could serve him; yet, at times, when he fancied himself neglected or ill used, his brutality suddenly burst forth, and by a reproof, which had more of rudeness than satire, he defeated the servile practices of years, and was generally dismissed with disgrace. His sullenness, which was extreme, nothing could conquer, but his insatiable curiosity, which led him to make the most minute enquiries into the private history of his acquaintances. Such anecdotes he retailed with the greatest avidity, and often occasioned much mischief by so doing. He had as strong an affection for Mrs. Meynell as he was capable of feeling. He had married her merely with a view to secure Mr. Seymour's good offices, who had been lavish in his promises of service, being earnest, from the worst motives, to promote this ill-assorted union. But though Captain Meynell had no views in marrying, but those of interest, his wife's sweetnes of temper, exemplary resignation, and uniform submission to his will, had

awakened every spark of tenderness in his bosom, and led him to feel a sincere wish to make her happy: yet, his sordid meanness, vulgarity, and ill-humour, continually frustrated that desire. His ferocious nature was softened, but not subdued; and his varying humours only produced, to his unhappy wife, “variety of wretchedness.” She was either wearied with his mirth, disgusted by his fondness, shocked by his meanness, or wounded by his brutality.

In her way from Mrs. Meynell’s Julia expressed, in the warmest terms, her admiration of that lady; to whose praises Mrs. Seymour reluctantly assented. Julia returned home, exulting in plans of future benevolence. She found Mr. Clifford at home, and Frederick Seymour with him. She told them, that Mrs. Seymour had introduced her to Mrs. Meynell, and declared how much she was pleased with that lady’s conversation and manners. While they were conversing on this subject, Mr. Clifford was called out of the room; and Frederick Seymour, who had listened to the history of her visit, with delighted attention, exclaimed with warmth, “I am not ignorant, Miss Clifford, of the generous motives which have prompted you to make this visit; for I have just had a conference with my old friend Mrs. Evans, who told me she had made you acquainted with Mrs. Meynell’s misfortunes.” “She is infinitely to be pitied,” replied Julia. “But she will henceforth be less unhappy,” rejoined Seymour, “for she will possess *your* sympathy, she will be blessed with *your* friendship, and the evils, which are soothed by such consolation, are more to be envied than deplored.” “It is later than I imagined,” said Julia, looking at her watch, “I must go and dress.” “Ah Miss Clifford,” returned he passionately, “must

“ must then the indulgence of conversing with you for a moment, be for ever denied me? What have I said, of what have I been guilty, to merit this severity?—Alas, Madam, far from daring to utter a sentiment unfit for you to hear, I have been lamenting the miseries of another, at the very moment when the acute sensation of my own wretchedness almost deadens every feeling of sympathy: in vain I have struggled to subdue that obstinate wretchedness”—“ Why, Sir,” said Julia, interrupting him, “ will you force me to fly from you, by using a language, which I cannot hear without indignation?” While she was hastening out of the room, he exclaimed, “ But one moment!” “ No Sir, not a moment.” She then left him, and when she reached her own apartment, forgot her intention to dress, and only thought of that look of despondency, with which Seymour saw her depart. Soon, however, rousing herself from this dangerous meditation, she dressed, and hastened into company, determined to allow herself not a moment more for the indulgence of reflection, which she was conscious, in her present state of mind, was but another name for the indulgence of sorrow..

Seymour remained, for some time after Julia had left the room, in a state of misery not to be described. Passionately as he loved her, he had no desire but that of seeing, of conversing with her, of possessing a place in her esteem and friendship. He had the highest respect for her character, nor ever suffered himself to harbour a wish inconsistent with the purity of her heart, and the rectitude of her principles. He was, therefore, filled with remorse and anguish, when he reflected that, by the weak indulgence of complaints in her presence, he had incurred her resentment; and, perhaps by wounding

wounding her delicacy, robbed himself of that share of her pity and regard, which was the sole alleviation of his misery. He left Mr. Clifford's house in the utmost perturbation of mind, and returned home disconsolate and wretched. Seymour, in vain, possessed distinguished talents, and was placed in a situation which opened a splendid and honourable career for his abilities. Absorbed by his unfortunate feelings, those talents were useless, and those advantages were lost. His mind resembled a fine-toned instrument, whose extensive compass was capable of producing the most sublime and elevating sounds; but a fatal pressure relaxed the strings, and sunk its powerful harmony.

The ardent, enthusiastic spirit of this young man was susceptible of the strongest and most lasting impressions. How carefully, therefore, should he have guarded against the weak indulgence of that imperious passion, which, on such a temper, produces the most fatal effects, and subdues all energy of soul! In vain would that spark of divinity within us, pursue the course of ambition, the ardor of enterprize, the researches of knowledge, or the contemplations of philosophy. Those noble, those exalted privileges of our nature, become a painful exercise to faculties which are chained to one idea, and to a heart which flutters round one object, and can as little change that object as the magnetic needle its direction; which, while every star in the glowing firmament sheds its brightness, points only, and unalterably, to one.



C H A P.

C H A P. XXVI.

MRS. Meynell wished much to return Julia's visit, but was for several days prevented by the badness of the weather; and her finances did not admit of the expence of a hackney-coach. For Captain Meynell, who was to the last degree mean and parsimonious in his disposition, denied her even the little indulgences his narrow income could afford; seldom allowed her to have a shilling in her pocket; and when he did, it was on the same condition upon which the vicar of Wakefield bestowed a guinea upon his daughters; viz. with a strict injunction not to change it.

The first fair day, however, Mrs. Meynell, in spite of dirty streets, set out for Mr. Clifford's house, which was in Berkley-square. She picked her way, with difficulty, through the dirt, apprehensive lest her cloaths should be splashed, which, she knew, would prevent her gaining admittance; the servants in wealthy families being, in general, very nice observers of etiquette, and proportioning their civilities, with great precision, to the dress and appearance of the visitor. In crossing over Piccadilly, Mrs. Meynell was stopped by a carriage, and, looking up, saw Mrs Seymour, with her mother and Miss C——, in the carriage. The ladies bowed to her somewhat superciliously as they passed, and Miss C—— looked after her till she could see her no longer. Mrs. Meynell conjectured that they were going to Mr. Clifford's and, mortified at the thoughts of meeting them, and fatigued and dispirited by her toilsome walk,

she

she felt a strong inclination to return home immediately: but, recollecting that she might, very probably, have the same disagreeable circumstances to encounter another time, she determined to proceed.

Mrs. Seymour and her party were, as Mrs. Meynell apprehended, going to Mr. Clifford's, where they were admitted. After the usual compliments, Mrs. Seymour enquired of Julia, if Mrs. Meynell had returned her visit? Julia answered that she had not. "Oh, then she will be here presently," rejoined Mrs. Seymour, "for we have just passed her in Piccadilly." "I'm sure," said Miss C——, "Mrs. Meynell takes a great deal of trouble to wait on you, Miss Clifford, for we met her wading through the dirt, poor woman," "I shall place a particular value on her visit," replied Julia, "if that will be any compensation for her disagreeable walk." "She is certainly very much to be pitied," said Mrs. Seymour, in a pathetic tone; "I'm sure my feelings have been deeply wounded by her situation. I must own I'm very sorry she's coming here this morning, and I almost wish you would be denied to her; my spirits are already so low, about my poor little dog. I'm afraid I shall lose him, after all my nursing: he seemed quite well yesterday, but this morning he has had a relapse." Julia, without once lamenting that Bijoux was subject to relapses, coolly said, that "she could not think of refusing admittance to Mrs. Meynell, as she was very desirous to have the pleasure of seeing her." "I believe she's a deserving young woman," said Mrs. Melbourne, and I should ask her oftener than I do to dine with me, (for I suppose, saving a dinner at home is some object in her circumstances,) but her melancholy looks are as disagreeable.

disagreeable as the face of a creditor to a man in debt; a sort of demand upon one's pity, that's very troublesome. Her clothes too are grown so shabby, that I can only ask her when I'm alone, and really my spirits are too weak to bear such a *tête-à-tête* frequently." "One cannot much wonder," replied Julia, "that a woman of Mrs. Meynell's sensibility is unhappy, in such a situation as her's." "For my part," rejoined Mrs. Melbourne, "I cannot understand what right people have to the indulgence of so much sensibility, who are in poverty. People in affluence may indulge the delicacy of their feelings; and mine, I own, are so affected by the company of unfortunate persons, that I am obliged, in regard to my health, to avoid them carefully. And I really blame Mrs. Meynell quite as much as I pity her. She has enough to eat and drink, and clothes sufficient to keep her warm and comfortable; but she must be hurt, forsooth, because her appearance is shabby. I suppose she wants to be dressed like Mrs. Seymour, which is absurd enough." "Then," said Miss C——, "one's obliged to be so upon one's guard in her company, for the least hint about her situation brings a fit of tears directly. I recollect, last time I met her at your house, you happened to say that you wondered, when people were poor, they didn't prefer some honest employment to living in poverty: I very innocently answered, that I supposed they found idleness easy enough; upon which she burst into tears, and left the room in heroics, saying, "If such a situation were easy, Madam, I should not be affected as I now am." "Really these airs are intolerable." "I own," said Julia, "what strikes *me* as intolerable, was your hint about idleness; for I see nothing, but what is natural, in a woman of family

ly and education resenting disrespect." "Family!" interrupted Mrs. Melbourne, "the best thing, Miss Clifford, that people in poverty can do, is to forget their pretensions to family, if any such they have; and this only requires the effort of a good understanding. Poverty, and high birth, are such an inconvenient alliance, that, if Mrs. Meynell cannot get rid of the first, I would advise her by all means to banish the recollection of the latter. When she comes into my drawing-room in an old gown, with the dignity of a Countess in her own right, and expects distinction on account of her family, she really strikes me as a very ridiculous figure." "Ridiculous indeed!" exclaimed Miss C——, with a laugh: "it puts me in mind of my green parrot, when his feathers have moulted. He retains only a little yellow tuft on his head; but he opens his wings with all the exultation possible, though they are as bare as a picked fowl." "I must suppose," said Julia, colouring with indignation, "Mrs. Meynell as deficient in understanding as your green parrot, Miss —, before I can believe she would expect attention from *you*, when she was not in *full feather*: I am sure she must long ago have discovered your partiality for fine plumage." Miss C—— was a little abashed by this speech, and before she had recovered herself sufficiently for the "reproof valiant," Mrs. Meynell was announced; whom Julia received with distinguished politeness, while Miss C—— bit her lips, and was ready to exclaim, "Why should the poor be flattered?" Miss C——, who had but a very small stock of urbanity and good-nature, always laid out her little fund upon usury; and demanded exorbitant gratifications of vanity or pleasure in return. She therefore considered Julia's civilities to Mrs. Meynell

nell as an extravagant profusion of an article, which, if properly applied, might be turned to some account.

When Mrs. Seymour and her party rose to take leave, after wishing Julia good morning, she turned to Mrs. Meynell, and said, " Shall I set you down?—but I must explain that it's not in my power to take you to your own door; your lodging is so out of the world, and I have a great circuit to make to my mother's, and Miss C——'s, and very little time this morning." " It's quite unnecessary to make any apology to me," replied Mrs. Meynell, coldly. " Well, but do give me leave to take you *part* of the way," rejoined Mrs. Seymour: " I'll set you down at the top of the Haymarket, wherever the street looks tolerably clean; and then at least you'll be within a shilling fare of home."

" I shall certainly put you to no inconvenience on my account," said Mrs. Meynell: " besides, I mean to stay a little longer with Miss Clifford." Upon this, Mrs. Seymour made her a slight courtesy, and departed.

When these ladies were gone, Mrs. Meynell and Julia enjoyed a conversation which rendered them more and more pleased with each other; and, after consenting to dine at Mr. Clifford's, the following day, and Julia having appointed an hour at which she would call for her in the carriage, Mrs. Meynell departed, soothed and gratified by her visit. Julia's attentive kindness seemed to her desolate heart like a solitary flower, that dispenses its reviving sweetness amidst surrounding thorns. But the pleasure she derived from her visit, was embittered by some farther circumstances of mortification: for, when she reached Mr. Clifford's street-door, the servant who opened it informed her

her that it rained a little; and asked if she chose to have a coach. Mrs. Meynell, who was conscious that she had but a single shilling in her pocket, which was insufficient to pay her coach-hire home, and which, if spent, would expose her to much brutality from her husband, told the servant that the rain was so trifling, it was of no consequence; and went away, walking very fast till she got out of sight of the house. When she reached Piccadilly, she met Capt. Meynell, and the shower increasing, they were obliged to take shelter under the porch of a door. In a few minutes, Mrs. Seymour, who had set down her mother in Hanover-square, and had since been at some shops in Bond-street, passed in her carriage, with Miss C——. The rain was now so violent, that Mrs. Seymour felt it was impossible not to offer to take Mrs. Meynell home. She therefore stopped the carriage, and begged they would come in. Mrs. Meynell, much mortified at being obliged to accept this offer, entered the carriage with regret, and her husband followed.

"My dear Mrs. Meynell," said Mrs. Seymour, as the carriage drove on, "I wonder you venture out such days as these: what would you have done if we had not happened to pass?" "Why," replied Mrs. Meynell, waited quietly till the shower was over." "But," rejoined Mrs. Seymour, in a tone of affected sympathy, "I'm really surprised you don't catch your death of cold, walking in such weather as this." "Why, you know, Mrs. Seymour," said Miss C——, "there's a great deal in habit: I suppose it would kill either you or me, but Mrs. Meynell is used to it." "Ah," thought Mrs. Meynell, "Is it the fault of poverty, Miss C——, if its path is rugged, and beset with thorns, that you find

find satisfaction in pointing their edge, and making the feet of the weary traveller bleed on his pilgrimage? Is it a crime in penury, if its bosom is defenceless, that you love to poison the arrows which pierce it?" Capt. Meynell, who had sense enough to comprehend the insolence of Miss C—'s observation on the force of habit, answered, in his usual blunt tone, " Why, faith, Ma'am, Mrs. Meynell, till lately, was as little *used* to walk in wet weather as yourself; and if we go to her ancestors, I believe, we shall find they have been used to a coach longer than any of the forefathers of this present company:—for instance, Miss C—, I read in the newspapers, that your family was made noble about five years ago, and Mrs. Meynell's has been noble about five hundred." Miss C—— frowned, and coloured, and, afraid of another reproof of equal plainness, observed a sullen silence the rest of the way.

Mrs. Meynell returned home, scarcely finding, in the recollection of Julia's sweetness, a compensation for the mortifications which had attended her visit. Capt. Meynell was in ill-humour at seeing his wife treated with disrespect. But, though he saw the tears of vexation fill her eyes, he comforted himself with the reflection, that her regret would pass away, and that, in the mean time, he had saved coach-hire to the amount of eighteen-pence. He had no conception of the keenness of his wife's sensations, and was entirely ignorant, that though, when a blow is levelled at the *body*, the degree of its force is known, it is impossible to guess what pain may be inflicted by a blow which is aimed at the *mind*. But Capt. Meynell was of opinion, that a little indignity might be submitted to, when

when it saved money; and was determined never to be guilty of such a waste of pity, as to prevent a few tears, which cost nothing, at the price of eighteen-pence.

C H A P. XXVII.

JULIA, offended at the expressions which Frederick Seymour had used at their late interview, carefully shunned all particular conversation with him; though this was accomplished with great difficulty, for scarcely a day passed without their meeting. Mr. Clifford was never happy but in his daughter's society. Their parties were generally the same, their visits were often made together, and Frederick Seymour usually placed himself next Julia, except when by some contrivance she put it out of his power. Charlotte, who had not the smallest suspicion of the real state of her husband's mind, was pleased to see him renew his former attention to her friend; till some circumstances, which we must now relate, brought the fatal secret of his passion to the knowledge of the unhappy Charlotte.

Mr. Seymour's plan for the accomplishment of his base designs on Mrs. Meynell, was such as suited a mind hardened in the practice of vice. He meant to reduce her to extreme distress; and persuaded Captain Meynell, over whom he had acquired great influence, by promises of a place, or pension, to remain in London. These promises, Mr. Seymour never meant to fulfil, till Mrs. Meynell, reduced to absolute want, and sinking in despair, might be driven to accept his assistance upon the only terms on which he was determined to bestow it.

It has before been mentioned, that Mr. Seymour entertained but a contemptible opinion of the strength

strength of female virtue: he had, therefore, formed his machinations, as he imagined, with the most artful skill, and entertained no doubt of his final success. Meanwhile, he persecuted this unhappy lady with his visits; expressed the most tender sympathy in her situation, and endeavoured to sooth her with offers of service. But he was not a little alarmed, when he heard that Mrs. Evans was housekeeper at Mr. Clifford's; being convinced, from what he knew of her character, that she would betray his designs to Julia. He also fancied he perceived a change in her manner towards him: but what gave him far greater vexation was, the progress of that young lady's friendship for Mrs. Meynell; for he saw that at the very moment when he was ready to seize upon his prey, Julia's friendship would rescue her from his grasp. He was now frequently deprived of seeing Mrs. Meynell, who spent much of her time at Mr. Clifford's; and when she was at home, he was often debarred any particular conversation with her, by finding Julia of the party. Two months were passed by him in this uneasy state of mind, when he accidentally heard, that Mr. Clifford was making interest to obtain a very profitable appointment for Capt. Meynell, in the East Indies. Mr. Seymour well knew, that Mr. Clifford's influence would render the success of his application certain. Enraged beyond all bounds at this discovery, which at once frustrated all his deep laid schemes, and would place the object of his pursuit entirely out of his power, he returned to his own house with his whole soul boiling with indignation against Julia, whom he justly considered as the chief mover in this application of Mr. Clifford's.

Mr. Seymour was hastening to conceal his emotion in his library, when, meeting Mrs. Seymour

mour on the stairs, she asked him to come into her dressing-room, saying she had something to tell him. When they reached the dressing-room, "O, Mr. Seymour," said she, "I have such a strange piece of intelligence for you; and I want to know your opinion of it. I have this moment heard, from a person whose penetration may be well trusted, that your brother Frederick is desperately in love with Julia Clifford, and she with him, and that they were so before his marriage." Mr. Seymour, whose prudence would have led him, in a calmer moment, to contradict a report which might produce the most mischievous consequences, being now entirely thrown off his guard by passion, disappointment, and indignation, hastily answered, that "if Mrs. Seymour had had much penetration, she might have found out that circumstance herself." "Is it really true?" said Mrs. Seymour. "I can't talk of it at present," he replied, impatiently, "for I have an appointment, and must be gone." He then went hastily out of the house; for he found himself unable to support either Mrs. Seymour's company, or the solitude of his library. His impetuous passions had met with the rudest shock: the machinations of years were in a moment defeated. Stung almost to madness by the failure of his designs, he found no relief in those projects of ambition, which usually occupied his aspiring mind. Every object on earth appeared indifferent to him but that which was lost, and he gave way to uncontrollable rage, frenzy and despair. If the guilty, even in success, are unhappy, how complete is their misery in disappointment! It is the natural tendency of vice to depress the mind, which, when loaded with the additional weight of sorrow, sinks into a deep abyss of despondency; while the buoyant spirit of virtue resists

resists the pressure of calamity, and floats upon the stormy ocean of life, unsubdued by the tempest.

When the violent agitation of Mr. Seymour's mind had a little subsided, he reflected on the imprudence into which resentment had led him, in assenting to a report which might involve his brother in so much misery. He therefore hastened home, in order to enquire from whom his wife had received her intelligence, and to charge her never to repeat it to any person whatever. But he reached home too late. Mrs. Seymour was gone out; and, as he had long perceived her envy of Julia's beauty, and was well acquainted with her disposition, he suspected she would be sufficiently ready to repeat any thing to her disadvantage. As soon as Mrs. Seymour returned, he desired to know from whom she had received the information she had given him, respecting Frederick and Julia. Mrs. Seymour, after some hesitation, being again urged by her husband to declare the author of this intelligence, at length mentioned Miss Tomkins. Mr. Seymour flew into a violent passion; swore that the circumstance gave him a diabolical idea of Miss Tomkins; and that he was convinced, she had mentioned her suspicions from some secret malignity towards Julia, who, he added, was too beautiful to escape the persecution of the women. He then enquired if Mrs. Seymour had repeated to any person what she had heard? She acknowledged that she had called upon Mrs. Chartres; that they had talked of Frederick Seymour; and that her son, who was at home, had mentioned so many strange circumstances in Seymour's behaviour, both before and since his marriage, that she was convinced he had discovered the secret: she had therefore ventured to remark, that it was a little unfortunate for poor Frederick, that his wife's

cousin was handsomer than herself. "But," added Mrs. Seymour, "I really repented exceedingly what I had said, when I found, that though Chartres repeated a thousand circumstances which would have brought conviction to any person of less simplicity than himself, he had remarked the effects, without ever conjecturing the cause. I am really vastly sorry for what is past, but I am certain that neither Chartres or his mother will ever mention this affair." Mr. Seymour, however, was much disturbed at this recital, and appeared far less certain than his wife, of Mrs. Chartres's capacity for keeping a secret.

But it is necessary to explain the motives which influenced Miss Tomkins, in communicating the above-mentioned intelligence to Mrs. Seymour. Miss Tomkins had, in the course of the winter, frequently been of the same parties with Julia, at Lord —'s, at Mr. Seymour's, Mr. Clifford's, and other places. Mr. F—— was always of these parties, and his attention was uniformly devoted to Julia. In vain Miss Tomkins hoped that Julia's indifference would at length conquer his passion; since farther acquaintance with that young lady did but add to his admiration of her beauty the most confirmed esteem for her character. Mr. F—— had penetration enough to perceive that Miss Tomkins resented his preference of Julia; but he was not of a temper to be compelled to pay any attention, to which he was not prompted by inclination. He possessed not that finished politeness, which levels all the distinctions of the heart, and casts an impenetrable veil over its feelings. Mr. F——, on the contrary, acted from the impulses of his own mind, and possessed that independent frankness of spirit which openly avows its preferences, and is at no pains to conceal dislike.

Miss Tomkins, who had flattered herself, during the space of some months, with delusive expectations of detaching Mr. F—— from Julia, returned home one evening from a party, where she had suffered so much mortification from that gentleman's neglect of herself, and attention to her rival, that, stung by envy, resentment, and despair, she determined to go the next morning, and relate what she had observed, of Frederick Seymour and Julia's mutual attachment, to Mrs. Seymour; through whom she hoped the report would spread wide enough at least to reach Mr. F——'s ear; and Miss Tomkins believed, that if the high opinion which he entertained of Julia's character was lessened, his admiration of her beauty would prove a transient sentiment, and might soon change its object. Miss Tomkins accordingly went to Mrs. Seymour the next morning, related her suspicions, and had just left the house when Mr. Seymour returned home.

His apprehensions, with respect to Mrs. Chartres, were too well founded. The moment Mrs. Seymour departed, big with the secret, full of anger against Julie, and pity for Charlotte, (who was her favourite on account of a present of potted hare, and a long Indian shawl) Mrs. Chartres hastened to Frederick Seymour's house, found Charlotte alone, and, without much circumlocution, began by lamenting the caprice and inconstancy of men; and, after some general abuse of the sex, finished her harangue by informing Charlotte of the report she had heard.—Charlotte was too much struck by the intelligence to have the power of making any reply. She only, after a pause of some moments, told Mrs. Chartres, in a faint voice, that she felt herself not very well, that she wished to go to her own room, and begged she would

would excuse her.—Mrs. Chartres, after some very common-place expressions of condolence, took her leave, quite unconscious of the degree of misery she had occasioned.

Charlotte immediately retired to her room, in a situation of which no words can convey an adequate idea. Every faculty of her soul seemed suspended; she felt a sensation as if a heavy weight had been laid upon her heart; she could not shed a tear; her memory retained every image confusedly; her brain was a chaos of perplexity and disorder; and she found that to think was distraction. When she had recovered the first numbing stroke of surprize, and horror, which seemed almost to annihilate her mind, the recollection of her past happiness called forth her tears, and she wept for a considerable time with great violence. Her reflections now threw a gleam of fatal light on the past. A thousand circumstances, which had hitherto appeared whimsical or capricious in Seymour, were now too plainly accounted for, and the horrible suspicion became every moment more confirmed to her distracted mind.

Alas ! in the sad catalogue of human evils, what calamity is so difficult to bear, as the discovery of indifference in that object to whom we have given our affections, and intrusted our happiness !—when we find that heart alienated, whose tenderness seems necessary to our existence; when we read coldness in that eye, on whose look our peace depends !—How severe are those pangs, for which we must not ask for sympathy, that anguish, which must be nourished in secret, and endured without complaint !—while memory recalls the images of the past, traces with cruel exactness the scenes which some passionate mark of fondness, some proof of former attachment have endeared

for ever!—repeats those expressions of tenderness which are recorded in the heart; reminds us even of the tone in which they were uttered, and gives additional bitterness to our pains!—In vain we summon fortitude to our aid. The efforts of reason are insufficient to stifle the agonies of passion, and silence the voice of despair!—Time may at length bid these violent emotions subside: misery will become habitual, and the mind may, in some degree, accommodate itself to its situation: but it must pass through many a severe extreme, it must sustain many a terrible conflict before it is thus made familiar with sorrow, or finds a refuge from it in the grave!

Sometimes, in the bitterness of her grief, Charlotte felt an impulse to fly to Julia, and repose her anguish on the bosom of her friend. But she suddenly recollects, with increased affliction, that this consolation was denied to her sorrows. Friendship, and love, seemed lost together, and her whole system of happiness was wrecked at once.—Thus the affrighted shepherd on the plains of Sicily, when the desolating fires of the volcano have destroyed his beloved cottage, and consumed his little treasure, longs to fly to the shelter of some holy temple, where his tutelar saints may protect him from farther calamity; but perceiving with horror the sacred fabric totter, the sainted shrines tremble: every ray of hope at once forsakes his distracted spirit.

C H A P. XXVIII.

THE unhappy Charlotte wiped away her tears before the return of her husband ; for her good sense taught her, that repining, or complaint, would only serve to tear asunder the last weak cords of affection, and altogether detach a heart, which she was now sensible she held only by the ties of pity. Love is a plant of delicate texture, and, when it droops, will never be revived by the tears of reproach ; which, like petrifying drops, harden, instead of cherishing, the spot where they fall.

Charlotte did not see Julia till two days after this fatal discovery, when they met at a concert at Mrs. Seymour's. Though but little disposed for music or company, Charlotte felt that it would be an easier task to go out, than to evade the anxious enquiries her father would make into the cause of her remaining at home. And, what perhaps weighed more with her than this consideration, was a conscious dread which hung upon her mind of betraying her feelings to Julia, whom she therefore wished first to meet in the bustle of a crowd.

Mr. Clifford chose to go early, and he and Julia came before any other company. They found Mrs. Seymour with Bijoux in her lap ; when she rung the bell for her maid to come and take charge of him, before any more company arrived. The maid advanced submissively towards him, patted his head very gently, and told her mistress how happy she was to see him in such good spirits ; and she was sure his chicken had done him good.

After

After more comments of the same kind, repeated in the tone and manner in which she would have addressed a young son and heir, and accompanied with many respectful endearments, Bijoux, who was more remarkable for beauty than good temper, snarling at being disturbed, was tenderly caressed by his mistress, and at length dismissed.

Charlotte came alone. Her father and Julia hastened to speak to her, and Mr. Clifford took notice that she looked pale. But Charlotte declared she was perfectly well, and forced herself to chat in her usual gay and easy manner, till her heart sunk at the exertion, and she contrived to place herself between two ladies who were strangers to her, and with whom no conversation was necessary. However, she soon repented of this measure; for, in the beginning of the first act of the concert, Frederick Seymour entered the room, spoke for a few moments to his wife as he passed, then hastened to the other end of the room, on pretence of paying his compliments to Mrs. Seymour, and, after a very short conversation with that lady, placed himself on a seat behind Julia, and talked to her earnestly. She answered but seldom, and seemed to wish to listen to the music; but Charlotte saw that Seymour constantly renewed the conversation. The heart of Charlotte was stung by sensations, which she had never felt before: jealousy had now taken possession of her bosom; its sharp-edged "iron had entered into her soul!" The ladies, who were seated next her, had endeavoured to engage her in discourse, and her natural disposition to oblige so far conquered her reluctance to speak, that she answered them with her usual sweetness. But, upon Seymour's placing himself by Julia, Charlotte's eyes wandered after him, her voice changed, and, though her companions

companions still continued to talk, she no longer knew what they said, or what she herself replied. Her mind was in a state of uncontrollable agitation; and, though music has power to sooth a gentle, or even a deep and settled melancholy, the torments of jealousy, the agonies of suspense, raise a tempest in the soul, which no harmony can lull to repose.

She thought *that* act of the concert would never finish, and, the moment it was over moved her seat, on pretence of speaking to Julia about an engagement the following day. She had scarcely seated herself by Julia, when Frederick Seymour rose, and went to speak to some gentlemen at another part of the room. Charlotte was so much hurt at his changing his place the moment she approached, which in a calmer state of mind she would not even have observed, that she could scarcely restrain her tears. But her agitation was concealed by the approach of Miss C ——, who came with great eagerness, to declare how much the company had been mistaken in their admiration of a song, which had been just sung by a young lady; and which, it was the general opinion, had been executed with the most pathetic sweetness and simplicity. Other performances of the evening had been applauded, with the usual exclamations of "Very fine! Charming! Wonderful execution! &c." but, when this song was finished, the cant terms of admiration were forgotten, while every eye glistened with pleasure, and every heart seemed affected. Miss C —— alone was quite astonished that the song was so liked. "For her part," she said, "she thought it extremely insipid; and she knew that Mrs. Seymour, who was so good a judge of music, admired that lady's style of singing quite as little as herself."

"Ah,"

“ Ah,” thought Julia, “ when will Miss C—— or Mrs. Seymour admire excellence ? ” Julia’s reflection was founded on a just knowledge of the character of these ladies. The lustre of excellence is as painful to envy, as the rays of the sun to the bird of night, who loves to pour his shrill cry when the birds of sweetest note are absent, and to flap his sable wings when they cannot be contrasted with the majestic plumage of the swan, or the beautiful feathers of the peacock.

The youngest Miss C—— did not encroach on her sister’s department of criticising the song, but undertook herself to criticise the singer, whom Charles Seymour having pronounced to be beautiful, she instantly exclaimed, “ Well, I wonder you can think her handsome ; her skin’s so coarse, and her colour so much too high ! besides she has such a remarkable long chin, and such very short eye-lashes ! — yet she’s tolerably *showy* upon the whole ; but I’m surprized any body should call her beautiful.”

Before the second act of the concert began, Charlotte, who was standing near the harpsichord, with a little circle of acquaintances, with whom she had no inclination to converse, turned over some leaves of a music-book, which lay upon the instrument, and found the song, the simple melody of which had been applauded. She read the words, which were as follow.

SONG.

S O N G.

BROAD in the west the sun descends,
I love his parting ray;
The robe of purple light he lends
To dress the fading day.

For then, in yon grey mist array'd,
Soon twilight hastens near;
And softly throws the deep'ning shade
That hides my frequent tear!

From *me*, capricious Beauty, take
The fruitless boon you gave;
Those useless graces, that can make
Each youth, but *One*, my slave.

All praise but *his*, I careless hear:
His words, alone, impart
The charm that ever sooths my ear,
And melts my partial heart!

False youth! tho' fair Louisa's face,
Tho' bright her tresses shine,
Canst thou in her light glances trace
The tenderness of mine?

Thy form, which from my heart I tear,
No more that heart shall move;
Alas!—the indignation there,
Is but the pang of love!

Charlotte, who could not, in her present state of mind, read the sentiment expressed in this song without emotion, in much agitation shut the book, and went to a seat at some distance. Julia had gone, a short time before, to the card-room with some ladies. Charlotte, when she reached the seat, looked round for her husband, but he was not in the concert-room, and she concluded he had followed Julia. The performers were now preparing to begin the second act; and Charlotte who knew that the sound of the music would immediately draw Julia to the concert-room, longed as impatiently for the beginning of the second act, as she had wished for the conclusion of the first; thought she had never known people so tedious in tuning instruments, and began to fear those obstinate violins would never be in unison. Alas, Charlotte! it was thy heart that was out of tune, and no longer beat in unison to pleasure or tranquillity. In a few minutes the music began, and the company returned to the concert-room. Charlotte looked wistfully towards the door, and at length Julia appeared, and Seymour soon followed. Charlotte beckoned to Julia to come and sit next her; "for then," thought she, "if he follows her, I shall at least hear what passes, and that will be some small comfort." Small, indeed, was the comfort reserved for Charlotte, who was now but too clear-sighted to the actions of her husband. He did not venture again to place himself next Julia, but contrived to engage in conversation with those who were near her; and though, in the intervals of the music, he occasionally left that part of the room for a few minutes, he was always sure to come back, and place himself where she was perfectly in his view. As a bird, that is frightened from her nest, still flutters round

the

the spot, and continually returns by a circling flight to the dear scene of her treasure.

In this act of the concert, Mrs. Seymour and Miss C— sung a duet; so tricked out with ornament, and performed with such affected distortions of the lips, and apparent labour, that the only person who seemed touched with enthusiastic admiration was Mrs. Melbourne; who sat with her eyes rivetted on her daughter, her mouth a little open, as if to draw in the angelic sounds; and, when the song was finished, was far louder in her applause than any one else; though, the company in general considered it as their duty to have recourse to the established routine, of “Delightful! Astonishing! and Divine”

When the concert was over, Mr. Clifford begged Seymour and Charlotte to go home with him to supper. Charlotte consented, notwithstanding she longed to give vent to her tears; “For,” thought she, “though I am so wretched myself, it must always be some pleasure to make my father happy: yes, yes, my father, at least, shall be happy! I will go to supper—“ with what appetite I may!”

C H A P. XXIX.

CHARLOTTE did not long succeed in concealing her affliction from Julia, who soon observed that her gaiety was assumed, and that some secret cause of sorrow hung upon her spirits. The source of her misery she could not discover; for, though she had often wondered that Charlotte had never discerned any traces of Seymour's unfortunate attachment, yet, since it had remained so long concealed, and since no particular circumstance had lately arisen to awaken suspicion, Julia concluded that his wife was still as ignorant of it as ever. In spite of all her efforts, Charlotte sometimes appeared absent and thoughtful; but, when accused of gravity by Julia, would start, as from a dream, and endeavour to smile at being suspected of low spirits; yet Julia's penetration discerned, that the smile was artificial, and the seriousness real. She went in vain the round of conjecture on this subject. Sometimes a suspicion came across her mind, that Seymour's attachment to herself was betrayed; but she felt such horror at the idea, that she instantly endeavoured to banish it from her imagination.

The time drew near when Mr. Chartres was to embark for the East Indies. He was convinced that his going to India was a thing fit and right, and an expedition he owed his country, on account of his projected improvements in philosophy, at his return: but, notwithstanding he had the welfare of philosophy much at heart, when the hour of his departure approached, he felt that the thoughts

thoughts of separation from those he loved, excited a sensation of uneasiness, which the prospect of future advantage to science had no power to remove; and that there was a chilling principle in sorrow, which damped the ardor of philosophical research, to a degree he had till now thought impossible. Chartres, who possessed an affectionate and grateful heart, felt himself bound by the strongest ties of obligation to Mr. Clifford, and would have sacrificed his life to render him the smallest service. He had the most sincere esteem for Charlotte, but Julia's softness had won his soul. She was his friend, his confidante, his counsellor; and he would certainly have been in love with her, if he had not foreseen how inconvenient he should find such a turbulent sensation at the distance of Bengal. He determined therefore to confine his tenderness within the peaceful limits of friendship; for he had heard, and gave some credit to the information, that when the heart ventured to stray beyond that tranquil boundary, the path, if sometimes covered with roses, was oftener tangled with briars; and the sky, if occasionally gilded by the rainbow, was more frequently obscured by the tempest.

Chartres came the day before his departure to bid Julia farewell. The tear stood in his eye, his heart seemed deeply depressed, and he repeatedly declared, that he looked forward to no other happiness at his return than that of enjoying her society; for in these moments his philosophical improvements were forgotten. He told her he had just taken leave of Charlotte, whom he found alone, and in great dejection; her eyes were red, and she appeared to have been crying over some papers which were lying on the table. "I saw marked upon the back of one of them," added

Chartres,

Chartres, "Sonnet to Peace, written by Julia." "When, at parting," resumed he, "I wished her every happiness, she burst into a violent fit of tears, shook her head, and desired me not to talk of happiness. I suppose she thought I was acquainted with that false report which my mother was so imprudent as to repeat to her. I see it has made her unhappy, and she has never been in good spirits since." "What report?" said Julia, in a faint voice. Chartres then repeated the intelligence which Mrs. Seymour had given his mother. Julia leaned back on her chair, and in a few moments burst into an agony of tears. "I wish I had not mentioned this affair," said Chartres, "if it makes you uneasy; but you have philosophy enough to despise it. I convinced Mrs. Seymour of its falsehood, not merely by vague assertion; but by facts which had come under my own observation. I told her, that, far from having any liking to you, I had remarked that he was never less agreeable than in your company; and was at so little pains to entertain you, that I had frequently known him, while speaking to you, forget what he was going to say; that whenever any body mentioned you, he seemed to find the subject disagreeable, and always assented to your praise as coldly as if he thought you did not deserve it."

Chartres was proceeding to relate the farther proofs he had given of Seymour's indifference, for his auditor had no power to interrupt him; but at this moment Mr. Clifford knocked at the door, and Julia, with a great effort, summoned sufficient strength to implore Chartres not to repeat to her uncle a report which would give him so much unhappiness. Before Mr. Clifford reached the room, Chartres promised, not only that he never would repeat it himself, but that he would also bind

bind his mother in the most solemn manner never to mention it again.

When Mr. Clifford appeared, Julia took leave of Chartres, and with some difficulty reached her own apartment, shut the door, and flung herself on a chair, covering her face with her hands, in an agony of mind almost insupportable. "At length," thought she, "the storm which has so long threatened me bursts upon my head:—Charlotte! Oh, Charlotte! must I be the wretched cause of your misery? Must I embitter all the fair prospects of your life, and overwhelm that affectionate heart with intolerable anguish? Why do I live to fill with despair that bosom which has supported and cherished me?—Oh, my father, my ever beloved father! would that the same grave which holds thee, had covered thy unfortunate child!—Why did my uncle receive me beneath his roof? Oh, far happier had it been for me to have been cast out a deserted orphan, than thus to spread desolation and horror in his family; to reward his benevolence by inflicting the sharpest calamity, by wounding him in the person of his child.—Yes, wretch that I am! by planting a dagger in the heart of Charlotte, I shall bring her father with sorrow to the grave. Perhaps his last breath will curse me!—no, he will pity and forgive me!—but will not his pity, his forgiveness, be more piercing than reproach, more terrible than his curse?"

Julia's mind was long absorbed by these desponding reflections. She gave way to uncontrolled affliction; sent Mr. Clifford word, that she was not well; and kept her room the remainder of the day. When her thoughts had recovered from their first confusion and terror, she deliberated on her future conduct; but knew not on what to determine.

mine. At one moment she thought of flying to Charlotte, of unbosoming her distress, and then forsaking her uncle's house for ever: at another moment she wished to find a refuge with Mrs. Meynell. But farther reflection convinced her that any of these measures would accelerate the mischiefs she so much dreaded, by revealing the fatal secret to her uncle, without mitigating, in the least degree, the wretchedness of Charlotte. Julia, therefore, resolved to bear her sufferings in silence, to devote herself to her uncle's happiness, and to shun Frederick Seymour more carefully than ever.

Meantime Mrs. Seymour, somewhat ashamed of her conduct to Mrs. Meynell on the rainy morning, determined to pay her a visit in her way to a party at no great distance; and, about eight o'clock in the evening, drove, with Mrs. Melbourne, to Charles-street. Mrs. Meynell had already drank tea, and, having devoted the day to mantua-making, had given orders not to be at home. But her servant had gone out, unknown to her mistress, and the woman of the house came up, almost out of breath, saying, "There were some ladies waiting in a carriage to know if she would see them." "Where is my servant?" said Mrs. Meynell, in great distress, "Have you said I was at home?" "Yes, Ma'am; but I told them I did not know whether you would chuse to see company." "Then I *must* see them," said Mrs. Meynell; who, though mortified at their intrusion, threw off her embarrassment, and received them with that ease and dignity which commanded respect. Mrs. Seymour said, she was come to wait upon her to tea; but on this hint, Mrs. Meynell remained quite passive, being sensible that it was needless to ring the bell, since there was

was no person to answer it. The children in the room above were crying in a most terrible manner, and the mother, in order to quiet the youngest, having put it into the cradle, began rocking with a degree of violence that shook Mrs. Seymour's nerves exceedingly; who expressed great surprize at Mrs. Meynell's remaining in such a lodging. At length the servant returned, and at length tea was procured; the cradle ceased to be rocked; and Mrs. Seymour's nerves ceased to be shaken.

Mrs. Meynell's conversation was that of an elegant and cultivated mind; and Mrs. Seymour, who happened to be in good-humour, and who possessed taste and understanding, though she strangely perverted both, grew insensibly pleased with Mrs. Meynell's discourse, in spite of her lodgings. As there were no gentlemen present, she threw aside the graces of affection; and, without having the smallest intention to be agreeable, was really much more so than usual: for she was too apt to dispose the flowers of fancy with the formality of a trim parterre, when she wished to please; and it was only in a careless moment that she suffered them to bloom with the graceful negligence of nature.

Charlotte and Julia now felt a mutual consciousness which embittered all their interviews; those feelings of tender confidence which formerly made every moment of separation painful, being lost for ever. Julia saw Charlotte pining with secret grief, into which she durst not enquire, and for which she knew there was no remedy; and Charlotte felt a degree of restraint in Julia's presence, and often a pang of jealousy, which made her avoid the society of her cousin, whenever she could find a pretext for so doing without exciting suspicion in her father. But though she skilfully concealed

concealed her feelings from him, she did not succeed in eluding the penetration of her husband. Frederick Seymour perceived, with inquietude and disappointment, that Julia was less frequently at his house than formerly; and, though accidental circumstances seemed to prevent it, he was convinced, from some observations he had made on his wife's behaviour, that Julia's absence was nothing less than accidental. The idea that his wife was unhappy, and unhappy from the discovery of his attachment to another, filled him with the deepest concern; and he endeavoured, by every mark of attention and kindness, to chase from her mind those gloomy suspicions which he feared she harboured. But this conduct could no longer confer happiness on Charlotte: she no longer mistook attention for tenderness, and kindness for love. Seymour was a bad dissembler, and often strove in vain to suppress his feelings. When Charlotte chose to stay at home, he frequently gave up his engagements to remain with her; but still it appeared to Charlotte a matter of duty, and not of inclination. His talents were no longer exerted for her entertainment, no longer made the hours pass almost imperceptibly away. Charlotte sometimes talked to him on subjects of taste and literature, of which he was fond, and on which he used to give her his opinions with eagerness and animation; but he now answered her enquiries in a cold indifferent manner, which shewed that he considered it as a task.

Sometimes she endeavoured to forget her wretchedness, and tried to divert him by those sprightly fallies with which he used to be amused; or indulged the fondness of her heart by an expression of tenderness; but she saw, or fancied she saw, that her gaiety, or her tenderness, were alike

alike troublesome, and received with a degree of coldness and gravity that petrified her soul. On these occasions she concealed her emotion till he left the room, and then gave way to the tears which she had with difficulty suppressed. Yet Seymour meant to give every proof of attachment, and earnestly wished to make her happy. But when those attentions which belong to affection are prompted only by a sense of duty, there is often some failure in the execution, even with the greatest rectitude of intention. Such services, when weighed in the scale of reason, may prove rigorously just, but, in the balance of love, they will be found wanting. The head may understand the general theory of kindness, but the heart only can practise the detail; as the sculptor can give to marble an expression of human feeling, but cannot animate the image with a soul.

We have obtained a copy of the Sonnet mentioned by Chartres, in the former part of this chapter:

S O N N E T

T O

P E A C E.

OH visit, soothing Peace! the thorny dale,
Where, sad and slow, my early steps are
led,

Far from the sunny paths which others tread,
While youth enlivens, and while joys prevail.
Then I no more shall vanish'd hopes bewail!
No more the fruitless tear shall love to shed,
When pensive eve her cherish'd gloom has

spread,

And day's bright tints, like my short pleasures,
fail!

But ah, lost Peace! on thee I call in vain.
When loud the angry winds of winter roll,
Can he who "bides the pelting storm," repose?
The bitter storms of life have pierc'd my soul!
Yet earth one lonely spot of refuge shows,
The sheltering grave, where Peace returns
again!

C H A P. XXX.

IT was about the middle of June, and Mrs. Melbourne invited a party to dine at her villa, near town. Charlotte was not well enough for this excursion. She expected in a short time to become a mother; and with delight had anticipated that period, when Seymour would have an additional reason for loving her; when the smiles of her infant would endear its mother, and convey, to the breast of both its parents, an emotion, which, though she had not yet felt, her heart told her would be exquisite. But these dreams of happiness were no more: she now only thought of the consolation she should find in bathing her unconscious infant with tears shed in secret. When Charlotte declined joining the party, Frederick Seymour declared he would remain at home; but she insisted on his going. Julia took an opportunity of intreating Charlotte to allow her to stay with her on the day of the party; but the offer was rejected with a degree of coldness, which shocked Julia so much, that she pressed the matter no farther.

The party, on their arrival at the villa, proposed to take a walk on the banks of the Thames. The villa was situated at a small distance from the village where Julia had formerly lived; and near Mrs. Melbourne's gate she met with a poor woman, whose husband, a labourer, used to work in Captain Clifford's garden. Julia stopped, and begged the company would walk on, while she spoke to her old acquaintance. They gave the woman

woman some money, and went towards the river. At the sight of Julia, the poor woman burst into tears. "Oh Madam," said she, "I've been in a power of troubles since you left the country. I've lost my husband, Madam, and a good soul he was to be sure, as ever broke bread. He never hit me a stroke in his life: we would have a *word* or *two* now and then, to be sure, but that was nothing to nobody." She then related the hardships she had undergone since her husband's death, which were confirmed by her meagre looks and threadbare garment. Julia, who knew she was a deserving object, gave her some present relief, and promised to allow her a weekly donation, which she should receive from the person who took care of Mrs. Melbourne's country house.

Without stopping, to hear the thanks and blessings of her pensioner, Julia then hastened to join the party, which she saw walking at some distance on the banks of the river; but at this moment, passing a little copse, she perceived Frederick Seymour coming through it to meet her. He came up to her in a few minutes. "Why did you leave the company, Mr. Seymour?" said Julia, in a tone of displeasure—"Because I could not bear to remain with them, when you were absent, and told them, I would wait for you: you know my abhorrence of the whole group of females I have left behind." Julia made no reply, for she was so much vexed and agitated at his having left the party, for the declared purpose of waiting for her, that she had no power to rally her oppressed spirits. "How," continued Seymour, "can any man who has the smallest taste for simplicity and nature, have pleasure in the society of such women as Mrs. Seymour and the Miss C——'s?—but *this* day, above all others, I find their company detestable;

and determined to shake off the restraint, at least for a few blessed moments." "I do not perfectly understand," said Julia coldly, "why their society should be so much more oppressive on this day, than any other." "Need I name the reason?" cried he passionately: "Oh it is a day to me the most decisive of my life! it was on this very day I first saw you!—Yes, Julia, dearest, most perfect of women, since *that hour*"—"Is it generous, Mr. Seymour," interrupted Julia, "thus to persecute me? to reduce me to the cruel alternative of forsaking my uncle's house, or being subject to discourse which it shocks, which it degrades me to hear?" Her voice faltered, and tears fell down her cheeks—"Oh," exclaimed Seymour, "what have I done? if you could see the contrition of my soul; if you could form an idea of my misery—" "Speak to me no more, Sir," said Julia, "for Heaven's sake let me endeavour to compose my thoughts." "Try then to forgive me, or, if I am unworthy of pardon, think at least of my wretchedness with some compassion!" Julia was silent, and Seymour, who saw her turn very pale, feared to increase her agitation; and durst not trust himself to speak. He bitterly lamented his indiscretion, only because he saw it had occasioned such disturbance to the mind of Julia; for, with respect to himself, he was careless what comments might be made on his conduct. The heart of this unfortunate young man had reached that fatal paroxysm of passion, when the opinions of the world become wholly indifferent; when the mind cherishes its unhappy feelings; when it lives not to itself, but to another; when every object, but one, sinks into insignificance; when all amusement becomes painful; all society irksome; and the diseased heart can only endure

endure the gloom of solitude, in the absence of that object to whom it was devoted; while every essential good, every important consideration, all that should be dear and valuable, is sacrificed to a passion, the remorseless tyranny of which has blasted in youth every blossom of hope, subdued every principle of fortitude, and conquered every effort of reason.

When Frederick Seymour and Julia joined the company, Miss C—— exclaimed, " You look very grave, Miss Clifford, I suppose your poor woman has told you a most dismal story." " Why yes," answered Julia, " it was a melancholy narrative of feebleness and want." " That's the worst part of attending to these poor creatures," said Miss C——; " they always insist upon telling one a story of hardships of a mile long. It's no great trouble to take a few shillings out of one's purse, but a true and faithful account of their whole history, is a monstrous *bore* to be sure." Seymour gave her a look of indignation, and Julia made no reply.

The day passed at Mrs. Melbourne's villa somewhat heavily; which generally happens, when people set out on what is called a party of pleasure. There seems to be such a perverse spirit in Pleasure, that, whenever we send that capricious nymph a particular invitation, she refuses to sit down at the banquet. The form of preparation frightens her from the vacant seat, and she fancies " the table's full."

As it rained violently the greatest part of the afternoon, the company looked at the country from the windows, walked from one room to another, and seemed at a great loss how to get rid of the hours which remained before the carriages were ordered. Mr. Seymour, who performed the honours

nours of the house, saw that he was expected to be gay and agreeable; but he was in no humour for either gaiety or agreeableness. He had not yet conquered the disappointment of his hopes; and, though he pursued his schemes of avarice and ambition as indefatigably as ever, Mrs. Meynell's image still floated in his imagination, and the certainty, that on the departure of her husband she would immediately banish him from her sight, disturbed his repose. Incapable of real tenderness, his passion, which had only impelled him to the destruction of its object, made him now sicken at the prospect of her happiness; nor could his mind furnish him with any soothing reflections to repel the force of disappointment. He could recall no acts of benevolence or generosity; no feelings of philanthropy or friendship; none of those kind and gentle offices, which, to a liberal and open heart are the dearest occupations of life. Mr. Seymour was conscious that his talents had never been employed for the benefit of any human creature, exclusively of his nearest relations; and that his fortune had promoted no man's enjoyments but his own. He was conscious of having intirely reversed that passage of scripture, which declares "that no man liveth to himself," for he had lived to himself only. But it seems to be the just punishment of selfishness, that, when its crafty wisdom has over-reached the unsuspecting part of mankind, and its schemes are successful, it does but enjoy a triumph, which an honest and ingenuous mind would think far too dearly purchased at the price of those exquisite sensations which arise from the benevolent affections. And, when the views of the selfish are disappointed, they cannot fly for refuge to the bosom of friendship. They have

been too much occupied by every other interest, to cultivate an interest in any human heart; and are condemned to brood over solitary sorrow. Mr. Seymour had indeed an affection for his brothers, which had led him to promote their advancement in life to the utmost of his ability: but even this sentiment was, in his breast, strongly tinctured with ambition, with the idea of aggrandizing his own family, and had something extremely selfish in its composition. When an enlarged, and comprehensive mind, such as Mr. Seymour possessed, capable of every noble exertion, and every liberal sentiment, employs its talents only to the narrow purposes of selfishness, how inadequate, how unworthy is the end to the means used for its attainment!—It seems as absurd and monstrous, as that system of philosophy, which imagined the sun, the moon, and all those innumerable worlds which fill the immensity of nature, were formed only to revolve round this little speck in creation.

Mr. Seymour, discontented with himself, disgusted with others, angry at being obliged to appear pleased when he was in ill-humour, and to talk when he chose to remain silent, felt as if this everlasting evening would never close. His impatience was perceived by Mrs. Seymour, who, being in very good humour herself, Mr. F—— having said some agreeable things to her during dinner, kindly saved her husband the task of supporting conversation any longer, by taking out her pocket book, which was stored with enigmas and charads. When the faculties of the company had been sufficiently exercised, Mrs. Seymour produced a sonnet, which she said she found on the carpet of her drawing-room, one evening the week before, when she had had a great deal of company.

company. "It was so scrawled," added she, "that I could not discover the hand-writing, and I can find no owner for it." The sonnet was as follows.

S O N N E T

TO THE

M O O N.

THE glitt'ring colours of the day are fled—
Come, melancholy orb! that dwell'st
with night,
Come! and o'er earth thy wand'ring lustre
shed,
Thy deepest shadow and thy softest light.
To me congenial is the gloomy grove,
When with faint rays the sloping uplands shine
That gloom, those penfive rays, alike I love,
Whose sadness seems in sympathy with mine!
But most for this, pale orb! thy light is dear,
For this, benignant orb! I hail thee most,
That while I pour the unavailing tear,
And mourn that hope to me, in youth is lost!
Thy light can visionary thoughts impart,
And lead the Muse to sooth a suff'ring heart.

Charlotte

Charlotte spent the day in solitude, which her unhappy reflections rendered miserable. She fancied she heard Seymour talking to Julia that soothing language which he so well knew how to use: she fancied she saw Julia listening to it with sensibility: she recalled a thousand circumstances which convinced her that Julia was not perfectly indifferent to his attention: she sighed, she wept at the recollection, and then thought of the happy moments which she had spent the preceding summer, in the society of her lover and her friend; when, favoured far above the common lot of humanity, she had no care but that of dispensing good to others, and no wish but that of deserving her own felicity. Oh Memory! why wilt thou for ever strengthen the dark shadows of present affliction, by contrasting them with the bright rays of past happiness?

At length Seymour returned, accompanied by his brother Charles, who told Charlotte that he had never passed a more tiresome day; that they had been persecuted by wind and rain, and bored with charades and enigmas.

In the course of conversation, Charlotte enquired about a curious shrub which her father had given to Mrs. Melbourne. Charles Seymour said "it was very flourishing." "I did not observe it," said Seymour. "No," rejoined his brother, "while we stopped to loook at it, you were at a distance with Miss Clifford." Charlotte changed colour: Seymour cast an angry look at his brother, and told, in some confusion, the story of the old woman. "Miss Clifford seemed very little pleased with your attendance," said Charles Seymour, "for I never saw her look so grave: Miss C—— whispered to me that she was sure she was in love." "I think Miss C——'s remarks," answered Seymour,

mour, sternly, “ are seldom worth the trouble of repeating.” Charles Seymour perceived that his brother was in bad temper, and, after repeating that he thought a rainy day in the country a great bore, took his leave, being engaged to supper at Miss C——’s

When Frederick Seymour and Charlotte were left together, she made some efforts to be cheerful, and had the good sense to forbear from all complaints. Alas! when an impassioned mind, wounded by indifference, attempts recrimination, it is like a naked and bleeding Indian attacking a man arrayed in complete armour, whose fortified bosom no stroke can penetrate, while every blow which indignant anguish rashly aims, on the unguarded heart.

C H A P. XXXI.

FREDERICK Seymour, Charlotte, and Julia, seemed by mutual consent to assume the appearance of cheerfulness in Mr. Clifford's presence. They all trembled at the idea of disturbing his peace, and extending the misery which preyed upon their own minds, to the bosom of their generous benefactor. Mr. Clifford was not apt to discern what others wished to conceal: he therefore mistook this imitation of happiness for the reality, and exulted in having been the instrument of dispensing felicity to the objects of his dearest affection, feeling it the most precious use of fortune. He passed his time in the exercise of piety and benevolence, and in the society of his friends; enjoyed a rubber at whist every evening; and had no subject of anxiety except the affairs of the state. He felt, indeed, the most watchful solicitude to preserve the balance of power in Europe, and was sometimes in low spirits on account of the national debt.

The youngest Miss C—— had lately been left the addition of ten thousand pounds to her fortune, by the death of a rich old aunt, with whom she was a favourite; and, a few weeks after she came into possession of her legacy, was married to Mr. Charles Seymour. This young man had begun the winter campaign by paying his addresses, in very rapid succession, to the daughters of a certain lord, a rich baronet, a nabob, and two bankers in the city; but was repulsed by the parents of those young women, on account of not being able

able to make settlements adequate to their fortunes. Upon receiving the intelligence of Miss C——'s legacy, he determined, though a little tired of acting the part of a lover, to perform that character once more. Accordingly he paid his addresses to Miss C——, was favourably received, and in a short time married. This union was formed on the wisest motives, considering the characters of both parties, notwithstanding he disliked his wife at the time of their marriage; and the feelings of the lady towards her husband, though they did not amount to dislike, calmly rested in indifference. But he knew that her fortune would be useful, and that her connections were honorable; and she, with no less penetration, discerned that his income, joined to her own, would support her with elegance. She saw that his conversation, and his shoe-buckles, his manners, and his toupee, were all perfectly *tonish*; gems of the first water, in the regalia of fashion; and thought that, upon the whole, he was a husband that would do her credit. Besides, she was now twenty-seven years of age, and had, in the course of the last ten years of her life, suffered many disappointments from being very apt to construe the slightest attention from any of the other sex, into an oblique declaration of love. If a gentleman was gay in her company, it was with a wicked design to win her heart; if he was grave, it was owing to the embarrassment of passion. Miss C—— fancied herself skilled in all the symptoms of love, and often entrusted the secret of her conquests to her confidential friends, somewhat prematurely; till at length, tired of misinterpretation, she determined to prevent such disagreeable mistakes in future, by marrying Mr. Charles Seymour, without farther loss of time.

With these sentiments of mutual convenience,
encumbered

encumbered with no feelings of reciprocal affection, confidence, or esteem, Mr. Charles Seymour and Miss C—— were united. Nor were their expectations deceived. They certainly enjoyed no domestic satisfaction, but thought *that* might well be dispensed with, as, in the crowd of successive engagements, it would have been impossible to find any time to be happy at home, even if they had felt the inclination; and when so many amusements courted their acceptance abroad, they had the moderation to think, that one small article of enjoyment ought not to be regretted. This congenial pair lived much apart; were very civil when they met; crowded a number of visits into each day; and partook of all the pleasure which dissipation can confer upon its votaries. It certainly was not a species of pleasure which an enlarged mind would pursue, or a feeling heart would relish; and occasionally it became so very tiresome, that, from the languor of their countenances, an uninformed spectator might have mistaken gaiety for penance. They sought for happiness as laboriously as an alchymist for the philosopher's stone; but found, that, like that undiscovered treasure, happiness was a hidden property, which mocked all the researches of the dissipated.

Julia's perplexities and sorrows did not make her negligent of Mrs. Meynell's affairs; and, though some of the evils under which she laboured were such as admitted of no remedy, Julia determined at least to remove the miseries of penury: a situation which exposes a delicate mind to those mortifications, of which, however galling, it were abject to complain, and unavailing to demand sympathy; since, though the world is liberal of its alms to poverty, wealth has monopolized its respect.

Mr. Clifford had, at Julia's solicitation, pro-
M 3 red

ced for Capt. Meynell a profitable appointment in India; and, the moment the affair was settled, she flew to Mrs. Meynell, and informed her of the success of the application. Mrs. Meynell attempted to speak, but her voice faltered, and she was unable to proceed. As the eye is oppressed by sudden light after darkness, so her heart was overpowered by sensations to which it had long been a stranger, and she burst into a violent fit of tears: but, how delicious are such feelings! Alas, the sources of misery, that give rise to tears, are many and various; but how seldom do they proceed from the overflowing tide of happiness!

Julia acquainted Mrs. Meynell, that it would be necessary for Capt. Meynell to go to India in a few months, and invited her, in Mr. Clifford's name, to take up her residence in his family during the absence of her husband. Mrs. Meynell received the invitation with rapture. "To find an asylum," cried she, in a voice frequently interrupted by tears, "to find an asylum beneath your roof, to enjoy your society, is to me, of all plans, the most soothing. Oh, after having so long contended with the world, after being shocked by neglect, or obliged to combat with insolence, how will your gentleness heal every wound of my heart! —Is there indeed such happiness reserved for me? Can the period be near when my days shall pass in tranquillity? —Alas, I never hoped to be at peace again! —I expected to bear the load of misery till I could no longer support its weight, and death came to my relief." —"Perhaps," added she, "I have been criminal in the indulgence of despondency; but I own to you, that I have been tempted to say to myself "In the morning, Would to God it were evening! and in the evening, Would to God it were morning!" —but I shall be happy again, and,

and, what will endear that happiness, I shall owe it to you!"

After an effusion of gratitude, which Julia in vain endeavoured to interrupt, Mrs. Meynell, in the fulness of her heart, mentioned the treatment she had received from Mrs. Seymour. "While Mr. Seymour," said she, "was paying his addresses to Miss Melbourne, she courted my acquaintance, because her intimacy with me brought them more frequently together. Yes, Miss Clifford, when I stood in no need of her friendship, she and Mrs. Melbourne were both profuse of kindness, and lavish in profession. But as soon as the period arrived, in which their friendship would have been useful; as soon as they discovered that I was left without support, and in a manner thrown upon their mercy for protection, they instantly changed the tone of their behaviour. To their friends my destitute situation was recounted with an ostentatious parade of pity; and when left alone with them, I met with those slight indignities, those petty insults, which are perhaps more difficult to bear than any other species of misery. They do not indeed rend the heart so deeply as severe misfortunes, but tear and gnaw its surface. Perhaps those who can thus heap wrongs on the unhappy, deserve nothing but contempt: yet, even while we despise the hand which inflicts the wound, we cannot avoid feeling pain from its smart. Had Frederick Seymour been in England," added Mrs. Meynell, "I should have been spared half the wretchedness I have suffered. He has a mind the most noble, and elevated; he has a heart the most generous, and affectionate!"— "I believe so," said Julia, faintly. "You answer but coldly," rejoined Mrs. Meynell; "surely you know him well enough to have discovered his merit.

merit. But I will hazard a reflection to you, which I can scarcely bear to indulge. He appears to me not perfectly happy: there is some secret cause of depression, some lurking sorrow, that seems to affect his spirits—Ah. Miss Clifford, you change colour! what do you know of this? is he not happy with your cousin?" "Indeed you mistake," said Julia; "you—I believe—I mean, I am sure Charlotte makes the best of wives." "I have no doubt of it" replied Mrs. Meynell, much astonished at Julia's embarrassment. "Her sweetness of disposition—" said Julia, endeavouring to speak with composure; but her voice faltered, and Mrs. Meynell, after waiting some time for the conclusion of the sentence, finding she was unable to proceed, answered, without seeming to observe her confusion, "Yes, indeed, her disposition seems formed to constitute domestic happiness, and perhaps my anxiety for him has led me into an error."

At this moment Frederick Seymour entered the room. "I am come," said he, with eagerness, "from Mr. Clifford, to give you joy of Captain Meynell's appointment." "You are very good," answered Mrs. Meynell, "Miss Clifford has just brought me those happy tidings." "It was an office," rejoined Seymour, with warmth, "which suits her perfectly." "Yes," replied Mrs. Meynell, "and I owe, not only the communication, but the event itself, to her goodness." "My dear Mrs. Meynell," said Julia, rising, "how very small must be the merit of any services, which are attended with the pleasure I feel at this moment!" She then departed, leaving Mrs. Meynell a subject of conjecture and alarm, in the confusion she had betrayed in their conversation respecting Seymour, which greatly disturbed her mind,

mind, even amidst the agreeable prospects which were just opened to herself. Julia, however, soon recovered the agitation she felt from Seymour's sudden appearance, and left Mrs. Meynell's, exulting in the felicity she had been enabled to confer. Benevolence was the ruling passion of Julia's soul. To sacrifice her own gratifications to those of others, to alleviate distress, and to diffuse happiness, were the most delightful occupations of her mind: and she had felt the same ardor of beneficence in her former confined circumstances, though it could not produce the same effects as in her present state of affluence. Charity resembles the Spring, whose benign influence, in a scanty soil, can only wake a few scattered blossoms; but in a more favourable situation, spreads a profusion of beauty, and rejoices the heart of nature.

C H A P. XXXII.

THAT unhappy passion which Frederick Seymour cherished, gained every day a more fatal ascendancy over his mind. To him every hour seemed lost that was not spent in Julia's society; for life, in his estimation, had no other value. The only ideas of pleasure and pain in his mind, were her presence, or her absence: for when he saw and conversed with her, he desired nothing more on earth; and when she was absent, he no longer felt any distinction or choice of amusement or society. All other objects were to him, alike indifferent; and the most agreeable company had as little power to give him entertainment, as the most insipid.

Meantime, Charlotte had too high an opinion of Julia's graces and accomplishments, and thought too meanly of her own, to believe she could ever regain the heart of Seymour. Every gleam of hope forsook her bosom: but she had sufficient command over her feelings to appear tranquil. She shuddered at the thoughts of betraying, by her looks, that acute anguish which had sunk into her soul; nor did her countenance discover those marks of agitation which a lighter affliction would naturally have impressed upon it. When a storm first arises, it throws deep lines of darkness amidst the struggling sun-beams; but when the gathered tempest has blotted out every ray, there is no longer any appearance of shadow.

Charlotte had sufficient fortitude to bear her misery without complaint; but she could not conquer

quer her feelings, though she endeavoured to suppress them. She sometimes received Julia with great coldness, and sometimes, from an impulse of jealousy, was at pains to prevent her from being placed near Seymour. This he perceived with resentment; and Julia, though she thankfully seconded Charlotte's intentions, discerned them with anguish.

One evening, when Charlotte had company, Julia, whose spirits were deeply depressed, appeared uncommonly grave. Seymour thought she looked ill, and wanted to place himself next her; but she was surrounded by ladies, and he could not accomplish his design; upon which he became impatient and tired, and when tea was over, went up to a young lady who was sitting next Julia, and, after much solicitation, prevailed on her to play a lesson on the piano forte. Charlotte well knew that Seymour had no fondness for any but simple music; and that, when young ladies were called upon to exhibit their power of performing what was difficult, he was ever ready to exclaim, with Doctor Johnson, "Would it had been impossible!" Charlotte, therefore, could give little credit to this sudden change of taste; for her heart told her, that he only wanted a pretence to place himself next Julia, and her jealousy prompted her, while he was attending the lady to the piano forte, to go and fill her vacant seat. Alas, it is the peculiar curse of jealousy, that its watchful spirit is never lulled to repose! And the reason why "trifles, light as air, are, to the jealous, confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ," is, that love instructs the heart to discern those minute shades of conduct which pass entirely unnoticed by others. It is often wounded by indifference. It is often stung by unkindness, while they lurk

under

under the usual forms of behaviour, and are altogether hidden from common observation.

Seymour, in a few moments, looked round, and saw that the young lady's chair was occupied by Charlotte; who asked Julia some indifferent questions, in which she clearly perceived that Charlotte's mind was not at all concerned, and discovered that the movement she had made was merely the effect of jealousy. When the lesson was finished, the young lady sat down in another part of the room; and, Charlotte being obliged to move on the entrance of more company, Seymour placed himself by Julia, who determined to leave him the moment she could do it without the appearance of rudeness. In the mean time, a gentleman was explaining to a circle at a little distance, a curious piece of mechanism he had just seen; in doing which he addressed himself particularly to Charlotte, who seemed attentive to what he said, but, in reality, knew not one syllable of what was passing. She was listening attentively to Seymour, and heard a few indistinct words, which heightened her chagrin, as she saw that Seymour's soul was absorbed in the conversation, and fancied that Julia heard him with pleasure. A gentleman who was placed next to Charlotte, afterwards tried to engage her in conversation; but though she was obliged to listen, she commanded her attention with infinite difficulty, her eyes often wandering involuntarily to that part of the room where Seymour and Julia were sitting. She tried indeed to smile at such parts of the conversation in which she was engaged, as seemed to require it, while her heart was overwhelmed with despair. Her absence of mind, however, was not remarked by this gentleman, who was a solemn sort of person, that studied his phrases; came into company prepared

to

to say what were called, by courtesy, *good things*, which he always accompanied with some action that displayed his large diamond-ring; and had no conception that human attention could be diverted to any other object while he was speaking.

The subject of Seymour's conversation with Julia was, the description of a scene he had been contemplating in his ride that morning. This he described strongly; and Julia, who delighted in every view of nature, could not hear him on such a subject with displeasure; seeing, however, Charlotte's eyes wandering towards them, the moment he ceased speaking, she rose and joined her party. Charlotte spoke to her very drily; and Julia was so much hurt by this coldness, that tears started into her eyes; and, as soon as the carriage was announced, she hurried out of the house, ready to exclaim, in the words of Shakespeare,

“ Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
 “ The sisters vows, the hours that we have
 spent,
 “ When we have chid the hasty-footed time
 “ For parting us—O, and is all forgot?”

More than usually depressed and wretched, it was some hours that night, after Julia went to bed, before she could compose herself to rest; and, when at length she fell asleep, her imagination was disturbed by dreams of horror. Sometimes she fancied herself wandering among fearful precipices, that overhung a deep abyss of waters, which rolled black and turbulent beneath; while on the edge of the the highest cliff stood Charlotte, with her bosom uncovered, and her hair dishevelled by the winds! Her face had lost all its sweetnes; her eyes had a look of frenzy; and darting a furious glance

glance on Julia, she accused her of having brought her to distraction! Julia was going to reply, but she sobbed violently, and the agitation of her mind awaked her. She fell asleep again; and fancied she saw Seymour stretched upon the floor; his eyes closed, and his features distorted by death. She called to Charlotte for help.—Charlotte appeared—her face was pale, her eyes were languid, and she tottered as she walked. When she came near she gazed on the lifeless figure at her feet, with her hands clasped. In an agony of grief, she knelt by the dead body, and kissed it a thousand times: then turning mournfully to Julia, she cried, “ This is your doing, but I forgive you!” Julia sprang forward to embrace her, and awoke. She determined to avoid a repetition of these gloomy visions, and arose earlier than usual.

Mr. Clifford went out as soon as breakfast was over, and Julia, who was much indisposed, gave orders to admit no company; but when her uncle returned, Frederick Seymour, whom he had met in the street, was with him. “ I have brought some drawings for you, Julia,” said Mr. Clifford, as he entered; “ do, Seymour, shew them to her, while I speak to the person who is waiting in the hall; I shall be back immediately.” He then left the room. Julia turned pale at being left alone with Seymour. She was overwhelmed with the sensations of the past evening, and the impression which the gloomy visions of the night had left on her imagination: but she endeavoured to assume, though not with much success, an appearance of tranquillity; and forced herself to talk of the drawings. Her remarks, however, were not very acute; and Seymour, though a connoisseur in drawing, displayed but a small share of critical judgment on this occasion. One of the drawings

was

was Thomson's Lavinia. Julia made some observations on the picture; but Seymour now preserved a gloomy silence, which she dreaded would end in some passionate exclamation, and therefore continued speaking, though she found it no easy task either to collect her ideas, or to articulate her words. "Thomson," said she, "is, of all poets, to me the most soothing; and when I feel any vexation, a few pages of the Seasons serve to calm my mind immediately." "Poetry has no such effect on me," replied Seymour: "it only renders me more susceptible of misery. Happy is the man who can imitate the wisdom of Chartres, who seeks for solace in mathematics instead of belles lettres, and employs his understanding, while his feelings are at rest."

One of the engravings was the picture of Charlotte at Werter's tomb. Julia, on seeing it, laid it hastily aside, and was going to examine another print: "Do let me look at the tomb of Werter," said Seymour. "I think it is ill executed," replied Julia. "You will at least allow that the subject is interesting," he rejoined. Julia was silent. "Are you of a different opinion?" said Seymour. "I think there can be but one opinion of that book," replied Julia: "every one must acknowledge that it is well written, but few will justify its principles." "I am one of those few," replied Seymour. "I am sorry for it," answered Julia; "but we will talk no more about it, for I do not wish to like it better." "But *one* word," said Seymour. "and I have done. People talk of the bad tendency of this book, and blame the author for blending virtue and vice in the same character, because the example is dangerous. Does any person, when pleased with a book, immediately determine to imitate the hero of it in every

every particular? and has not the Author of our being blended virtue and vice in the great book of nature? Why does Werter interest us? Because he is not a phoenix of romance, but has the feelings and infirmities of man. He is subject to the power of passion—let those who never felt its influence, condemn him; those who *have* felt its influence, too well know that it is absolute, that it is unconquerable. The heart that is bleeding with an incurable wound, needs not the cold counsels of reason, to be informed that such feelings are painful, and ought to be subdued. It is already but too sensible of these truths; but it is also sensible, that its misery is irretrievable, that it mocks the vain efforts of prudence; and that, if peace depends upon indifference, it is a good which is unattainable, which can never—“ I must interrupt you,” said Julia, in a faltering voice, “ for I cannot stay any longer.” He did not attempt to detain her, but rose in great agitation to open the door, and she hurried away. She met Mr. Clifford in the hall. “ You have staid a long time, Sir,” she said, with some difficulty: “ I could not dispatch my business sooner,” he replied: “ but you look very pale, Julia, are you well?” “ Very well,” said she, in a voice scarcely audible, and then hastened to her room. “ How cruel,” thought she, “ is my situation! I make every effort to avoid him, yet am I continually drawn in his way, and have no power to prevent it, without discovering to my uncle that fatal secret, which would for ever rob him of peace. What will become of me?—how shall I act?—where shall I fly?—alas, I see no end of my conflicts but in death! would I were prepared to die!—Oh my dearest, my ever lamented father! is your spirit still hovers over your child, affit and

and guide her in these perplexities.—Oh never, never will she again enjoy those days of sweetness and tranquillity, which were spent under your protecting care!—Yet Heaven, that sees my heart, knows it is guiltless.”

Julia dined that day at Frederick Seymour’s, with a large company, Mr. Clifford being engaged with a party of gentlemen. After dinner, Julia found herself so ill, that when the ladies returned to the drawing-room, she told Charlotte that she had a bad head-ach, and begged she would allow her to go home. Charlotte no longer felt any wish to detain her; for, though they were still obliged to pass much of their time in each other’s society, restraint, perplexity, and uneasiness, had taken place of the tender intercourse of affection. These fair friends were like two roses, which had once grown on the same stalk, but which some rude hand had torn asunder; and though their leaves were still mixed together in one nosegay, the tie, that formerly united their stems, was broken for ever.

Julia was anxious to depart before the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, and sent immediately for a chair; but, at the moment a servant came to tell her a chair was ready, the gentlemen entered the room. Seymour, with a degree of perturbation which he could ill conceal, came up to her, and enquired where she was going: “I have the head-ach,” she replied, “and am going home.” “Let me hand you to your chair,” said Seymour, following her out of the room. A few minutes after, a violent noise and confusion were heard in the hall. Charlotte rang the bell, but it was not answered, and, the noise still increasing, she went to the door, where she heard a number of voices, and a great tumult.

She

She hastened down stairs, accompanied by several gentlemen, and found that one of Julia's chairmen had fallen near Frederick Seymour's door: the chair was broken, and the glasses were shattered. When Charlotte reached the hall, Seymour and the servants were taking Julia out of the chair: her forehead was cut with the broken glass, and bled violently. Charlotte, as she came towards her, cast a glance at Seymour, and, from the despair visible in his countenance, concluded that Julia was dying. She flew eagerly to her assistance, while Seymour, in a voice of horror, uttered words the most incoherent, and seemed deprived of his reason: but, in the general alarm and confusion, the agonies of his mind were unobserved by all but Charlotte; who, though much affected herself by Julia's situation, could not perceive Seymour's violent agitation without an emotion the most painful. A surgeon was sent for, who stopped the bleeding, and found that the wound was but a slight one. Charlotte intreated her cousin to remain all night at her house; but Julia assured her she was well enough to return home. Charlotte's carriage was immediately ordered, and, when it was ready, Frederick Seymour insisted upon attending Julia home: in vain she declared, that she was quite recovered, and that his going was entirely unnecessary. Seymour persisted in his design, which Charlotte felt herself obliged to second; though that look of distraction, and that voice of despair, to which the accident gave rise, were still present to her mind.

Julia, in the way home, remarked to Seymour, "that it was fortunate his servants saw the accident, and came so immediately to her assistance." "The only person who saw the accident," replied Seymour, "was myself. I was looking

after your chair, and when I saw it fall, flew to the spot, and called to the servants to follow." Julia, after this information, thought it prudent to say no more on the subject. Seymour was still in too great perturbation of mind to trust himself to speak; and they reached Mr. Clifford's house without uttering another word.

C H A P. . XXXIII.

IN the midst of many worldly schemes, which it would have required a length of years to accomplish, Mrs. Melbourne was seized with a dangerous disorder. Mrs. Seymour paid her a visit of half an hour every day; but the remainder of the day was spent in solitude, which afforded no very comfortable reflections to her mind, opportunities of doing good which she had neglected, being the subjects of her frequent meditation. How different is the opinion which we cherish of ourselves in the days of health, and when we feel the approaches of death! At the appearance of that king of terrors, the delusive mist which self-love throws around our vices and our weaknesses, "melts into thin air," and the naked heart shrinks from its own observation.

Mrs. Melbourne now became sensible, that she had not deserved the blessings of friendship, and she found herself left to die without its consolations. Deserted by every body, formal messages to enquire how she did, were all the marks of sympathy she received; for she had no friend to pay her those tender offices, those minute attentions, which smooth the bed of death, and which money cannot purchase of those who are paid for their attendance on the dying. Her servants were more occupied by their own affairs than her sufferings; and, being no longer able to exercise authority, she was left entirely to their mercy. The person to whom she was most obliged was Julia, who, when she found her desolate and unhappy, visited her every day;

day, and administered all the comfort her feeling heart could give.

Mrs. Melbourne left her daughter a considerable addition of fortune; and Mr Seymour, who had long been weary of those civilities which decency obliged him to pay to the mother of his wife, and who was eager to seize on her property, heartily rejoiced in her death. Besides, it was one of his opinions, that no woman ought to survive the age of fifty; and he had often secretly blamed Mrs. Melbourne for being guilty of so great an impropriety.

Charlotte's apprehensions that the heart of Seymour was wholly devoted to another, had received the most cruel confirmation from his behaviour while he thought Julia's life in danger. Thrown entirely off his guard, by the surprize and horror which the accident occasioned, he had displayed in those moments, to the watchful eyes of Charlotte, the uncontrolled agonies of afflicted tenderness, the distracted solicitude of apprehensive passion. His voice, his look, his frantic movements, being all treasured in Charlotte's remembrance, her coldness and restraint towards Julia daily increased, and gave the finishing stroke to the peace of that unfortunate young lady. To know she was the cause of Charlotte's wretchedness, to see her heart alienated, to read reproach and anguish in her looks, which used to beam with affection and delight, was a species of misery which the sensibility of Julia was unable to sustain. Her frame was naturally delicate; and the uneasiness of her mind at length produced so great an alteration in her, that she grew pale and thin, lost her appetite, and her health sensibly declined.

Charlotte's heart was too honest, and affectionate, to observe these symptoms of decay with unconcern,

concern. Julia never made the least complaint, but Charlotte now discerned in her countenance the sadness of her mind. She was conscious she had of late treated Julia with harshness; and revolving in her mind every circumstance of Julia's conduct, she felt that she had not merited this unkindness. She fancied she saw her sinking into the grave without complaint, and struggling to conceal from every eye the anguish that preyed upon her heart. The warm and generous bosom of Charlotte was unable to support these reflections: her jealousy was softened; her suspicions vanished: she thought only of Julia's virtues, and she felt that nothing was dearer to her than Julia's friendship.

Mr. Clifford and Julia coming to dine at Frederick Seymour's, Charlotte received her cousin with the tenderness of former days. At dinner Julia sent away her plate when she had scarcely eaten a morsel. Charlotte, who was watchful of her, and observed it, tried to persuade her to eat something more, which Julia declined. When the servants had left the room, "Indeed," said Charlotte, with eagerness, "I can bear this no longer—I am sure Julia is very ill, though she does not complain. Yes, my dearest Julia," added she, bursting into tears and sobbing, "my first, my beloved friend, yes, you are ill, and I am miserable!" Julia, equally astonished and affected at this effusion of tenderness, had no power to make any reply. She pressed Charlotte's hand in hers: while Mr. Clifford insisted that a physician might be sent for immediately. Julia made all the opposition she could, from a consciousness of the inability of medicine "to minister to a mind diseased;" but Mr. Clifford's fears were awakened, and he was not to be moved from his purpose. The physician

sician was sent for; but Julia found, in the returning tenderness of Charlotte, a cordial of more powerful efficacy than any which the art of medicine could administer.

Seymour felt Charlotte endeared to him by the solicitude she displayed for Julia. He saw his wife's excellence—was charmed with her generous affection, and endeavoured, by the most tender and unremitting attention, to convince her how highly he esteemed her virtues. Charlotte's open and ingenuous heart was soothed by this conduct. She perceived that Seymour had the strongest desire to make her happy; and she felt her former tenderness for Julia awakened by the dread of losing her. She could not endure the tormenting idea that her neglect or harshness would perhaps shorten the life of Julia; of the dear companion of her childhood, the beloved friend of her youth, the constant associate of her joys and sorrows. She behaved to her with her former kindness: Seymour carefully restrained his feelings; Julia grew better, and they lived for some weeks in great cordiality and friendship.

Mr. F—— called at Mr. Clifford's one evening, and finding Charlotte and Julia sitting at work, he desired their permission to read to them a poem, written by a friend lately arrived from France, and who, for some supposed offence against the state, had been immured several years in the Bastile, but was at length liberated by the interference of a person in power. The horrors of his solitary dungeon were one night cheered by the following prophetic dream.

T H E

B A S T I L E,

A

V I S I O N.

I. 1.

“ D REAR cell! along whose lonely bounds,
 “ Unvisited by light,
 “ Chill silence dwells with night,
 “ Save when the clang ing fetter sounds!
 “ Abyss, where mercy never came,
 “ Nor hope, the wretch can find;
 “ Where long inaction wastes the frame,
 “ And half annihilates the mind!

I. 2.

“ Stretch’d helpless in this living tomb,
 “ Oh haste, congenial death!
 “ Seize, seize this ling’ring breath,
 “ And shroud me in unconscious gloom—
 “ Britain! thy exil’d son no more
 “ Thy blissful vales shall see;
 “ Why did I leave thy hallow’d shore,
 “ Distinguish’d land, where all are free?”

I. 3. Bastile!

I. 3.

Bastile! within thy hideous pile,
 Which stains of blood defile.—
 Thus rose the captive's sighs,
 Till slumber seal'd his weeping eyes—
 Terrific visions hover near!
 He sees an awful form appear!
 Who drags his step to deeper cells,
 Where stranger wilder horror dwells.

II. 1.

“ Oh, tear me from these haunted walls,
 “ Or those fierce shapes controul!
 “ Lest madness seize my soul—
 “ That pond'rous mask of iron * falls,
 “ I see!”—“ Rash mortal, ha! beware,
 “ Nor breathe that hidden name!
 “ Should those dire accents wound the air,
 “ Know death shall lock thy stiff’ning frame.”

II. 2.

“ Hark! that loud bell which sullen tolls!
 “ It wakes a shriek of woe.
 “ From yawning depths below;
 “ Shrill through this hollow vault it rolls!”
 “ A deed was done in this black cell,
 “ Unfit for mortal ear!
 “ A deed was done, when toll’d that knell,
 “ No human heart could live and hear!

II. 3.

“ Rouze thee from thy numbing trance,
 “ Near on thick gloom advance;

* Alluding to the prisoner who has excited so many conjectures in Europe.

“ The solid cloud has shook ;
 “ Arm all thy soul with strength to look,—
 “ Enough ! thy starting locks have rose,
 “ Thy limbs have fail’d, thy blood has froze :
 “ On scenes so foul, with mad affright,
 “ I fix no more thy fasten’d sight.”

III. 1.

“ Those troubled phantoms melt away !
 “ I lose the sense of care—
 “ I feel the vital air—
 “ I see, I *see* the light of day !—
 “ Visions of bliss ! eternal powers !
 “ What force has shook those hated walls ?
 “ What arm has rent those threat’ning towers ?
 “ It falls—the guilty fabric falls !”

III. 2.

“ Now, favour’d mortal, now behold !
 “ To soothe thy captive state,
 “ I ope the book of fate,
 “ Mark what its *cgifters* unfold !
 “ Where this dark pile in chaos lies,
 “ With nature’s execrations hurl’d,
 “ Shall Freedom’s sacred temple rise,
 “ And charm an emulating world !”

III. 3.

“ ’Tis her awak’ning voice commands
 “ Those firm, those patriot bands,
 “ Arm’d to avenge her cause,
 “ And guard her violated laws !—
 “ Did ever earth a scene display
 “ More glorious to the eye of day,
 “ Than millions with according mind,
 “ Who claim the rights of human kind ?

IV. 1. “ Does

IV. 1.

“ Does the fam'd Roman page sublime,
“ An hour more bright unroll,
“ To animate the soul,
“ Than this, lov'd theme of future time ? —
“ Posterity, with rev'rence meet,
“ The consecrated act shall hear :
“ Age shall the glowing tale repeat,
“ And youth shall drop the burning tear !

IV. 2.

“ The peasant, while he fondly sees
“ His infants round the hearth,
“ Pursue their simple mirth,
“ Or emulously climb his knees,
“ No more bewails their future lot,
“ By tyranny's stern rod opprest ;
“ While Freedom guards his straw-roof'd cot,
“ And all his useful toils are blest.

IV. 3.

“ Philosophy ! oh, share the need
“ Of Freedom's noblest deed !
“ 'Tis thine each truth to scan,
“ Guardian of bliss, and friend of man !
“ 'Tis thine all human wrongs to heal,
“ 'Tis thine to love all nature's weal ;
“ To give each gen'rous purpose birth,
“ And renovate the gladden'd earth.”

C H A P. XXXIV.

WHEN Charlotte's hour of danger approached, she intreated Julia to come and stay at her house during her confinement. Julia was gratified by this mark of confidence, but excused herself from staying in the house; promising, at the same time, to spend with Charlotte the greatest part of every day.

Charlotte being delivered of a son, Seymour beheld his child with transport, and Mr. Clifford felt the birth of this infant a renewal of his own existence. A few days after her lying-in, Charlotte was seized with some degree of fever; and Julia, terrified at her danger, no longer hesitated to remain at the house; where she scarcely quitted her bed-side for a moment, and attended her with unremitting care. In a few days the disorder abated; and Julia was sitting in Charlotte's room, soothed with the hope of her recovery, when she received a message, that a person below wished to speak to her. She went into the parlour, where she found Frederick Seymour alone. He told her, that he had had, for some days past, a very oppressive pain in his head, and that he had that morning felt himself so much disordered, that he had made Charlotte's physician feel his pulse. "He says," added Seymour, "that I have a considerable degree of fever, and has ordered me to go to bed immediately. I am terrified at the thoughts of alarming Charlotte; but I find myself so much indisposed, that I must obey the doctor's directions." Julia promised she would endeavour to conceal

conceal his illness from Charlotte, at least for that day, and then, in much anxiety, left the room.

The physician visited Seymour again that evening, and found he was worse. The next day Julia, who could no longer evade Charlotte's enquiries, or find any pretext for his absence, was obliged to inform her of his illness, which she did in the most cautious manner. Charlotte lamented her own confinement, and implored Julia to attend him, and see that no care was neglected. For some days his fever increased. He believed himself in danger, and intreated Julia not to enter his room, telling her that he knew his disorder was infectious, and that he trembled lest she would suffer from her attendance on him." Julia replied, " that she was not afraid of the consequences, and that her duty to Charlotte"—her heart grew full, and she paused.

The next morning the physician declared that his patient was better. Julia flew to give this joyful intelligence to Charlotte; who insisted upon being carried into his room, notwithstanding Julia's representations of the danger attending it, in her present state of weakness; but Charlotte would not be dissuaded, and was supported into his room by her attendants. She threw her arms round his neck, and wept violently. He was affected by her tenderness, and perhaps not less so from observing that Julia wept too. " We shall be happy yet, my dearest husband," said Charlotte, " and how shall we ever be grateful enough to Julia, for her care of us both?" " She has been our guardian angel," replied Seymour, with emotion.—" Indeed," said Julia, " I must now use my authority as head-nurse, and insist upon Charlotte's returning to her room; for I am convinced, this scene has already been too long for either

either of my patients." Charlotte still clung to Seymour in an agony of tenderness, and was with difficulty prevailed on to return to her own apartment; which she at length did, attended by Julia.

As the physician had pronounced Seymour so much better, Julia did not think it necessary to visit him again until the evening. Perhaps, if she had followed the dictates of her heart, she would have gone sooner; but she was too virtuous to do more on this occasion than duty required. When she went to his bed-side in the evening, and enquired how he did, she was shocked by a remarkable change in the tone of his voice. His articulation was thick, and confused, and he spoke with a quickness quite different from his usual manner. He told her that he was much better, but Julia doubted it from the way in which he told her so. She waited anxiously, when the physician came, till he left his patient's room. "How is Mr. Seymour?" said she, eagerly. "I am concerned," answered the physician, "to tell you, that he is worse." "Good God!" said Julia, starting, "I apprehended this—his voice is changed." "It is," said the physician, "and the fever has increased most rapidly—You look very pale, Miss Clifford, let me lead you to a chair." She burst into tears—"Oh, how shall I tell Charlotte?"; she exclaimed. "I entreat you will not tell her, at present," said the physician: "he must be kept perfectly quiet: this night will probably determine the issue of his disorder." "This night!" said Julia, clasping her hands. "Do not tell Mrs. Seymour of this change in his disorder, till to-morrow."—"But if he should die to-night?"—"That is not probable," said the physician. Mr. Clifford entered the room, and the physician, after informing him of the unfavourable change

change in Seymour's disorder, advised him earnestly to conceal it from Charlotte, at least for some days, since, in her present state of weakness, it might produce the worst consequences to herself.

When Julia returned to Seymour's apartment, she found him delirious. "Oh, you are come again!" exclaimed he with quickness—"I thought you were gone for ever—I dreamt you had forsaken me—left me to die alone!—I had a horrible dream!—my head burns while I think of it—Charlotte looked fiercely on me!—Charlotte will never pardon—she was gentle once, but now!"—he gave a deep sigh—"Do not speak, my dear Mr. Seymour;" said Julia, faintly.—"Dear!"—he repeated, in a low muttering tone—"Oh Julia! Julia!—if I am dear—I charge you mark the spot where I am buried!—mark where they lay me—never, never forget it!—and let it be your grave—it will be no crime, Julia!—Tell me if it will be a crime."—Julia left his bed-side to wipe away her tears.—"Where is she? where is she?" said Seymour, in a hurried manner, to the nurse.—"Do you want Miss Clifford, Sir?" she enquired.—"Miss Clifford," he repeated.—"She will be here, Sir, directly."—“Oh bless her! Merciful Heaven, bless her!—If I could pray, my last prayer should—But don't tell Charlotte—poor Charlotte! no, no—I dare not pray for Charlotte!"

Mr. Clifford and Julia sat by his bed-side all night. He continued talking at intervals with the wildest incoherence; sometimes raving of Julia, then fancying he was kneeling to Charlotte for pardon, and calling to his infant to plead for him. Mr. Clifford considered all he said as the inexplicable wanderings of frenzy; but Julia, who well understood

understood their force, listened to them with unutterable agony.

The next morning his pulse grew much weaker, and a few hours before his death the delirium ceased. He called Mr. Clifford to his bed-side, took hold of his hand, which he affectionately pressed, and thanked him fervently for all his past goodness to him—He then enquired if Charlotte was informed of his danger.—Mr. Clifford told him that the physician had declared it would be risking her life, to acquaint her with his situation. “ Oh, no ! ” cried Seymour, “ let her be spared a scene of parting—but tell her—since I shall never see my wife and child again ! —tell her, that my affection, my esteem for her virtues”—His voice faltered, and he was unable to proceed. Mr. Clifford, in great emotion, left the room; and Seymour desired the nurse to let Miss Clifford know he wished to speak to her.

When Julia came into the room, he begged she would order the attendants to leave it. He then said, in a faint voice, “ I have solicited this last interview, my dear Miss Clifford, that I may obtain your forgiveness, and may die in peace. Oh, Julia, forgive me all that is past—pardon the uneasiness my conduct has given you—Oh, tell me, while I yet live to hear it, that you forgive me ! —the atonement of my errors will soon be made ! —a few hours.” His voice became choked by his rising emotion; and her hand, which he held in his, was bathed with his tears. She mixed her tears with his—she assured him in broken accents, that her heart would ever cherish his memory with esteem and regret. He then directed her where to find the key of his scutore, telling her it contained some things which he wished to restore to herself, that her feelings might not be wounded

wounded by those memorials being exposed to other eyes. Julia unlocked his scrutore, and found her lost glove, together with some verses and notes, in her own hand-writing, which he had preserved on that account. He desired to see those treasures once more. He took them eagerly from her, pressed them to his bosom, his lips, and declared he would only have parted with them in death. Then growing fainter from these exertions, and seeing her violently affected, he said, with much emotion, " Let not this scene, I conjure you, make too deep an impression on your feeling heart. Oh, if my remembrance will embitter your peace, think of me no more!—Have I desired you to think of me no more?—alas, Julia, my heart assents not to that request! Oh, no! my heart refuses to be forgotten by you—let me be sometimes recalled to your mind, and when the grave shall hide me for ever from your sight, think not of me with resentment." " Alas," said Julia in a faltering voice, " is not the anguish with which I am overwhelmed at this moment, a proof that my resentment is past, and that all that remains is the bitterness of sorrow?" " I hope," said Deymour, after a pause of some minutes, " I hope Charlotte will find comfort in your friendship. Poor Charlotte! I fear she has of late been unhappy; *she*, who is so deserving of felicity—Oh, it is fit I should die, who only lived to embitter the lives of those to whom my soul is most devoted—Comfort my poor Charlotte, dearest Miss Clifford, and assure her that my affection for her was active even in death." He now became still fainter. " Oh," cried he, in a low indistinct voice, " how often have I wished to die in your presence!—how often have I desired that you might be near me when I yielded my last breath; that your regret might

might soften my latest moments—that you might be the last object my eyes beheld!—Oh, speak to me, Julia, speak, and let me hear your voice once more!” She tried to speak, but she had lost the power of utterance. She gave him her hand—he pressed it to his lips—she lifted up her eyes, and perceived he had fainted. She rose with some difficulty, and rang the bell for the attendants: he recovered from the fainting, but soon after became speechless. Mr. Clifford and Julia knelt by his bed-side, and he held her hand clasped in his.—Oh, is there any sorrow like that which we feel, when hanging over the bed of our dying friend?—when we know there is no hope; when we are certain that a few minutes must tear them from us for ever!—when we bathe their stiffening hands with unavailing tears, and see them suffering pains beyond the reach of human aid; and when, at last, we lift our eyes to Heaven, not in the blessed hope of their recovery, but only to implore that the latest struggles may be alleviated, that their pangs may be short.

When Seymour’s eyes were closed, he still continued to grasp Julia’s hand, and in a short time expired.

Such was the fate of this unfortunate young man, who fell the victim of that fatal passion, which he at first unhappily indulged, and which he was at length unable to subdue. The conflicts of his mind, by insensibly weakening his frame, gave greater power to his disorder, and thus probably shortened the life they had embittered.

Let those who possess the talents, or the virtues, by which he was distinguished, avoid similar wretchedness, by guarding their minds against the influence of passion; since, if it be once suffered to acquire an undue ascendancy over reason, we shall in

in vain attempt to controul its power: we might as soon arrest the winds in their violence, or stop the torrent in its course. It is too late to rear the mounds of defence when the impetuous flood rages in its strength, and overthrows all opposition. With a frame labouring under disease, we may recall, with regret, the blissful hours of health; but have no power to new string the nerves, or shake off the malady that loads the springs of life. Alas! the distempered heart, when it has suffered the disorders of passion to gain strength, can find no balsam in nature to heal their malignancy; no remedy but death. In vain we may lament the loss of our tranquillity; for peace, like the wandering dove, has forsaken its habitation in the bosom, and will return no more.

Julia, so far as she had indulged any sensibility to Seymour's attachment, was proportionably wretched. Women have even greater reason than men to fortify their hearts against those strong affections, which, when not regulated by discretion, plunge in aggravated misery that sex, who, to use the words of an elegant and amiable writer*, "cannot plunge into baseness, or dissipate themselves in pleasure and riot, as men too often do, when under the pressure of misfortunes; but must bear their sorrows in silence, unknown and unpitied; must often put on a face of serenity and cheerfulness, when their hearts are torn with anguish, or sinking in despair." Though a woman with rectitude of principle, will resolutely combat those feelings which her reason condemns; yet, if they have been suffered to acquire force, the struggle often proves too severe for the delicacy of the female frame; and, though reason, virtue, and

* Vide Dr. Gregory's Legacy to his Daughters.

piety, may sustain the conflict with the heart, life is frequently the atonement of its weakness.

Julia, when she saw that Seymour was dead, fixed her eyes on his corpse: she shuddered, she groaned deeply, but uttered not a word. From this dreadful stupor she was roused by a message from Charlotte, who suspected, from the anxiety visible in the countenances of her attendants, that Seymour was worse; and Julia's looks confirmed all her apprehensions. She enquired eagerly for her husband: Julia spoke, but her words were incoherent, and only half-pronounced. Charlotte, every moment more alarmed, became so positive in her determination to be again carried into his apartment, that Julia was obliged to acknowledge that his fever was increased; and when this only made Charlotte more earnest in her desire to see him, Mr. Clifford was forced to give her the fatal information that Seymour was no more.

Charlotte lamented him with all the violence of unrestrained affliction, and a thousand times reproached her father and Julia for having concealed his danger, and denied her the melancholy consolation of attending him in his last moments. The shock she had sustained long retarded her recovery; but at length she regained her health, and found comfort in her infant, whom she nursed herself, and in whom she centered all her hopes and affections. After some time, she returned to her father's house, where she and Julia lived in the most perfect friendship.

Mrs. Meynell, on the departure of her husband for India, was received into Mr. Clifford's family, where she was treated with every mark of respect and kindness. Captain Meynell, a few years after, died in India; and the fortune he had acquired

quired was transmitted to his wife, who still continued to live in Mr. Clifford's family.

Mr. Seymour, disappointed in his designs on Mrs. Meynell, pursued other objects of pleasure, and formed new schemes of ambition; but neither ambition, nor pleasure, could confer felicity on a mind which was harrassed by impetuous passions, and unsupported by conscious integrity.

Mrs. Seymour perceiving, in a few years, that the bloom of youth was fled, endeavoured to supply the deficiency with an additional quantity of rouge; devoting more hours than formerly to the duties of the toilet, and pathetically lamenting, in secret soliloquies, the inhuman ravages of time.

Mr. Chartres, by his own diligence, and the assistance of powerful friends, was soon enabled to send considerable remittances to his mother; who removed to a house, where the drawing-room held her card-tables with more convenience, and discharged Thomas for a fashionable domestic.

Mr. F—— spent most of his time at Mr. Clifford's house, remaining unmarried, and preferring Julia's friendship to an union with Miss Tomkins; who also continued single, and suffered the most severe mortification from the failure of her schemes on Mr. F——. Still, however, she continued to impose an artificial character upon the world; uniting, with the miserable triumphs of deceit, the comfortless sensations of selfishness.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Seymour lived together on the most fashionable terms; too careless to regard decorum, and too indifferent to feel jealousy.

The eldest Miss C—— remained single, and, whenever she heard of a splendid marriage, longed to forbid the banns.

The dying image of Seymour was long present to Julia's imagination, and the parting words he had

had uttered were engraven on her heart. When the all-subduing influence of time had soothed her sorrows into greater tranquillity, she found consolation in the duties of religion, the exercise of benevolence, and the society of persons of understanding and merit. To such people her acquaintance was highly valuable, and she lived admired, respected, and beloved. She refused many honourable offers of marriage, and devoted much of her time to the improvement of Seymour's child, whom she loved with the most partial fondness. But the idea of its father still continued, at times, to embitter the satisfaction of her life; which, but for that one unconquered weakness, would have been, above the common lot, fortunate and happy.



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

